

THE RUSSIAN ARMY AND THE
JAPANESE WAR



GENERAL KUROPATKIN REVIEWING HIS TROOPS.

Frontispiece, vol. ii.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY AND THE JAPANESE WAR,

BEING HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL COMMENTS ON
THE MILITARY POLICY AND POWER OF RUSSIA
AND ON THE CAMPAIGN IN THE FAR EAST,

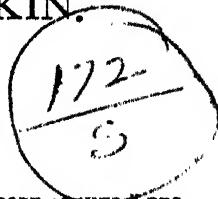
BY GENERAL KUROPATKIN.

TRANSLATED BY

CAPTAIN A. B. LINDSAY,

2ND KING EDWARD'S OWN GURKHA RIFLES

TRANSLATOR OF "THE BATTLE OF TSU-SHIMA"; "THE TRUTH ABOUT PORT ARTHUR," ETC.



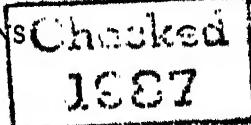
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MAJOR E. D. SWINTON, D.S.O., R.E.,

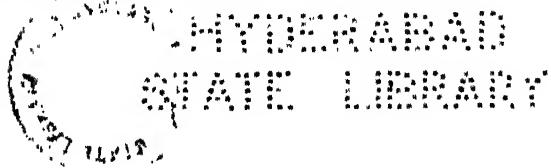
AUTHOR OF "THE DEFENCE OF DUFFER'S DRIFT";

AND EDITOR OF "THE TRUTH ABOUT PORT ARTHUR."

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS



IN TWO VOLUMES: VOL. II.



LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1909

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THE RUSSIAN ARMY AND THE JAPANESE WAR

CHAPTER IX

REASONS FOR OUR REVERSES (*continued*)

The insufficient tactical preparation of our troops—
Measures taken to improve it.

I HAVE touched upon the fact of how our want of tactical training was shown up in the Crimean and second Turkish Wars. Especially conspicuous was the inability of our senior commanders—relying as they usually did upon quite inadequate information as to the enemy's strength and dispositions—to co-ordinate the operations of the different arms towards one end, and their ignorance of where to deliver the main attack. The minor part played by our cavalry and our comparatively great power of defence were also remarked. Finally, attention was drawn to the fact that our lack of the power of manœuvre compelled us to place superior numbers in the field against the Turks, a course which had not formerly been necessary.

After the war of 1877-78 we set to work to study our weak points, in order to eliminate our faults. Much must have been accomplished since then, for the tactical training of the army at the beginning of the recent war was undoubtedly of a higher standard than it was twenty-five years ago. Still, in some matters we had not progressed, while in others we had actually gone back. The duty of training the troops rests with commanding officers of all ranks, and the responsibility for this extends right up to those in command of military districts. Although the same drill-books and manuals are used by the whole army, there is considerable variety in the way that the tactical instruction is imparted, owing to the diverse views held by the district commanders. I have taken part in many manœuvres, and was in command of the army at the grand manœuvres at Kursk in 1902, and I noted down what I considered to be our principal failings in this respect. In October, 1903, I submitted a report on the subject to the Tsar, in which my conclusions on certain points were as follows :

“ 1. Staff Work with the Main Army and with Detached Columns at the Grand Manœuvres.

“ Generally speaking, the staff work cannot be characterized as entirely satisfactory. The principal reasons for this were the somewhat unhappy selection of the officers appointed to be chiefs of

the different staffs, the poor organization of the staffs themselves, due to a limited personnel and to an insufficient supply of the means of communication [telegraph and telephone equipment] for both the troops and staffs, and the neglect to arrange proper intercommunication between units by making use of mounted orderlies, automobiles, or cyclists. Intelligence of the enemy as well as of the disposition of other units was always received late by those whom it concerned, because the cavalry was badly organized, and could not carry out its orders properly.

“ The amount of writing done by the various staff-officers was colossal. They worked the whole evening and all night ; their effusions were lithographed or printed, and were sent off in all directions ; but the orders were rarely received by the troops in proper time. At the manœuvres of the Warsaw Military District in 1899, cases came under my notice of general officers commanding divisions receiving the order to move in the morning two hours after the time appointed for them to start.

“ In many instances staff-officers with troops seemed ignorant of how a reconnaissance should be carried out, and consequently did not gauge the dispositions of the enemy’s forces with sufficient accuracy. This reacted in turn on the dispositions made by the chief commanders, more particularly in their employment of the reserves (Kursk manœuvres and those at Pskoff and Vlodava). Similarly, they did not know how to arrange for the maintenance of touch along the front and to the rear, a defect which caused a delay in the receipt of orders and information which was quite avoidable.

“2. Work of the Cavalry at Manœuvres.

“The increased importance now attached to the strategic or independent duties of cavalry has, in my opinion, acted detrimentally upon the cavalry work with the troops. The spirit of the strategic rôle was in most cases not properly grasped, and the chief idea of the masses of mounted troops of both sides appeared to be to meet each other. They therefore neglected to furnish the commanders of their sides with the information of the enemy, so necessary before an action, and left the infantry without their co-operation during the actual combat; this was the same whether they were acting in attack or defence. Long-distance patrols often did useful work, but owing to the lack of proper means for the quick transmission of the information collected, it reached the troops to whom it might be useful after the enemy's dispositions had been changed. The near patrols did not work in with the long-distance ones. Our mounted troops were frequently allowed to lose touch with the enemy at night under the pretext that the men and horses required rest, and the employment of a dozen troopers was grudged after dark, when by day whole divisions and corps were futilely marched and countermarched, and sent upon duties which were not always in accordance with the general idea of the operations.

“The cavalry work should be more strictly in co-operation with that of the other arms than it is at present, and all officers in command of mounted units should remember that their rôle is auxiliary, and largely consists in assisting the General in command to come to a proper decision by the completeness and accuracy of the

information they send back ; that the cavalry should help the commanders, firstly, to frame a plan of action, then to crush the enemy on the field of battle.

“3. Attack and the Defence.

“Here again information was wanting. When commanders made up their minds either to attack or to stand on the defensive, they were never able to feel, from their information of the enemy and the locality, that they thoroughly knew what they were doing, or that it really was in accordance with the spirit of the general idea. We were strong in the defence, but we rarely delivered a soundly conceived or executed attack. In the attack column commanders did not always take pains to obtain enough accurate information as to the dispositions and strength of the enemy, so as to be able to appreciate the situation properly and draw up a reasoned plan of battle, to select the direction of the main attack, to allot the troops for it, and take steps to deceive the enemy as to its precise direction. When they had massed sufficient first-line troops for the main attack, they did not also move up the reserves of all arms.

“In particular, we did not know how to conduct the advance, and then deliver the assault with proper preparation by artillery and rifle fire. Many commanders seem, unfortunately, to be wedded to the idea of carrying out a continuous advance without making any use of the rifle. If we ever encounter an enemy, such as the Germans, who systematically train their troops to advance under cover of their own heavy rifle-fire, we shall be worsted, for in peace we often advance

almost without firing a rifle to a range of 1,000 or even 800 paces of the position.

“The guns also frequently ceased fire at the same critical period—*i.e.*, when their attacking infantry are nearing the enemy. My inquiries as to the reason for this were usually met with the reply that their ammunition was expended. If the absolute necessity for keeping in hand a considerable number of rounds for the assistance of the decisive infantry attack is not realized now that we have quick-firing guns, our artillery will in war become useless at the very moment when its co-operation is most vital.

“In defence we are better than in the attack, and we know how to make the most of the fire effect of both guns and rifles. The ranges in front of a position are usually measured and clearly marked. But proper use is not made of reserves. We do not, as we should, throw them into the firing-line, so as to increase the volume of fire after the enemy’s main attack has developed, nor do we launch them in a fierce counter-attack after he has come within decisive range. The reserves are often kept in mass, and thrown against the attack without any supporting rifle-fire. Many regiments and brigades told off as reserves to a defensive position go through the whole manœuvres without firing a single round.

“4. The Revival of the Column Formation in the Attack.

“Other European armies are now doing everything possible to minimize the murderous effect of modern rifle and artillery fire on themselves, and are, at the same time, endeavouring to develop their own fire to the utmost, both in

the attack and defence ; indeed, the Germans, in their efforts to this end, have gone the extreme length of deploying all their troops—sometimes even to the sacrifice of their reserves—in long thin lines. We, on the other hand, judging by the last manœuvres, are going to the other extreme, for our decisive attack is delivered almost without any fire preparation, and with men massed in quarter column !

“ If a stop is not put to the increasing density of our attack formations, we shall suffer for it heavily. It is all the more dangerous for us, as we do not assist our assaulting infantry properly with supporting gun and rifle fire.

“ 5. The Work of the Artillery.

“ Artillery positions were in most cases skilfully chosen, but the fire discipline was often bad. As batteries can only carry a limited number of rounds in the field, it is vital that the gunners should be taught to economize every round ; this is, of course, particularly important with quick-firing guns. But we often fired more rounds than were necessary : fire was opened too hurriedly, at quite unimportant targets, with the result that, at the critical moment of the attack, batteries had to signal that they were in action, for all their ammunition had been expended.*

“ 6. The Work of the Sappers.

“ The bloody lessons of Plevna and Gora Dubniak put fresh life into our military

* [To economize ammunition at manœuvres, batteries sometimes signal that they are firing instead of actually doing so.—ED.]

engineering, which lasted for a certain time after the Turkish War. Our sappers became skilful at constructing trenches and redoubts, and the other troops were also trained in field-works, and began to like entrenching themselves. But a reaction soon set in. This was largely due to General Dragomiroff, who did much to bring about a return to the old order of things, when it was held that everything was decided by the bayonet. He was quite opposed to the use of cover, and carried his orders on this subject to the height of absurdity, even forbidding his men to lie down while advancing to attack!

“To dig oneself into the ground means labour, and takes much time. Moreover, instructions used to be issued that all trenches dug had to be filled in again, and all redoubts dismantled. This at once limited the scope of trench-work in the army. The entrenching tool, which after the Turkish War had been valued next to cartridges and biscuits, was relegated to the mobilization store, and never brought out for use or even for inspection. At many manœuvres the men were not practised at all in the fortification of positions; at others the alignment of trenches was traced only. While giving the sapper units full credit for their excellent training, I cannot but express my fear that they specialize far too much in a mass of detail, and ignore the fact that their main duty in war is to co-operate in every way with the infantry, both in strengthening defensive positions and in the attack of them.

“7. Criticism by Commanders.

“It is gradually becoming the custom to omit all criticisms* at grand manœuvres. Mistakes, therefore, pass unnoticed, are repeated, and tend to become chronic. I remember some very instructive manœuvre criticisms made by General Gurko, and I have listened with interest and advantage to others made by General Roop. Discussions after the operations are always held in the Kieff and St. Petersburg Military Districts, but nowadays some officers in command of districts neither make any remarks themselves when present at manœuvres, nor expect them to be made by the officers commanding sides or the other seniors. Orders issued after a long period—though they may enumerate the various points noticed—and the reports eventually printed of large concentrations and manœuvres, are comparatively useless for instruction. To be of use, criticisms must be made by the commanders, and made on the spot.

“It is, however, important to realize how rare the power of good criticism is. The remarks usually made are either quite colourless or too highly pitched. Some of our most capable general officers also seem peculiarly ‘unlucky’ in the way they manage unnecessarily to hurt the feelings of commanding officers by their harsh way of putting things. They forget that to lower the prestige of a senior in the presence of his juniors always produces a bitter harvest, especially in war. They forget the infinite variety of the conditions of different tactical

* [What in the British Army are colloquially known as “Pow-wows.”—ED.]

situations, and that at peace manœuvres there is no need for one side to win or lose. Again, independent action, though certainly not wrong in itself, is often put down as a mistake and adjudged to be wrong because the senior commander has his own opinion in the matter. Such narrow-minded criticism deprives officers in command of units of the spirit of independence, of initiative, and of the desire for responsibility. Instead, they try to discover the fads of the officer in command, in order to 'play up' to them.

“ 8. Conclusion as to the Tactical Instruction of our Troops.

“ Although the opinion of the generals in command of military districts in all matters pertaining to military training should, and do, carry great weight, yet there must be some limit to individual action. It is impossible, for instance to permit each of them to train the troops in his command entirely in accordance with his own views as to what is most important in war ; for the instruction of attack and defence should not be carried out on entirely different lines in the different districts. Yet this is more or less what has been done. We at headquarters are partly to blame, owing to the delay in the publication of the field-service manuals and the instructions for the combined training of all arms. As an example of what I refer to : General Dragomiroff has trained the troops under him in the Kieff Military District to attack according to a system of his own, of which the soundness is open to doubt. If some of his theories are carried out in war, they will result in heavy loss, and therefore their incul-

cation in peace seems entirely wrong. His order that the skirmishers escorting artillery should be on a line with the guns themselves would only cause the premature silencing of the latter; and another, that the lines of skirmishers advancing to attack should not lie down when halted, is simply impossible of execution. When bullets are flying, a line lies down of its own accord as soon as it halts, and quite rightly so, as men get cover more easily when lying than standing. And now, following General Dragomiroff's example, in the Vilna Military District General Grippenberg has begun to act according to his own theories, and depart from the textbook. In his District Orders this year,* in which were published his criticisms on the work done at manœuvres, he recommends that infantry in close order should receive cavalry with independent fire † instead of with volleys. He insists, also, that when a line is advancing by short rushes, these rushes should begin from the flanks.

“Unfortunately, much that I saw when inspecting the troops in the different districts and on grand manœuvres led me to the conclusion that the tactical training, especially in command, of officers commanding units, from regiments upwards, is neither sound nor uniform.”

My strictures on the peace tactical training of the army were, unfortunately, only too well confirmed during the war.

The theatre of war in Manchuria presented many peculiarities of climate, topography, and

* [1903.—Ed.]

† Independent fire is difficult to control, and almost impossible to stop in action.

inhabitants. It was unlike any of the "probable" theatres of operations we had studied, and was, therefore, quite new to the troops who came from European Russia. The Japanese were not only new and practically unknown foes, but the nature of the information that we did possess about them tended to show our great superiority, and therefore incited us to contempt. The existing edition of our "Field Service Regulations" was obsolete, and the revised edition was still in the Press. Special instructions, therefore, had to be issued, in order to assist our troops to grapple with the entirely strange conditions under which they were placed. These were compiled and printed under my direction, and distributed to officers in command of all units, from companies and squadrons upwards, and to all chief staff-officers. In them I emphasized the necessity of getting to know something about the enemy, enumerated their strong and weak points, and drew attention to their patriotism and traditional indifference to death. I stated that their strong points predominated, and that in the Japanese we should find a very powerful opponent, even when reckoned by European standards. I continued :

" It is most important that in the first engagements, in which they will certainly be in superior strength, we should not give the Japanese the

satisfaction of victory, for that will only still further elevate their spirit.

“No particular or new tactics need be adopted against our present enemy, but we must not repeat the mistakes in manœuvring which cost us so dear in the Turkish War of 1877-78.”

I then mentioned the causes of our reverses at Plevna, and commented in detail on the most important. After capturing Nicopolis, our troops moved on Plevna in ignorance of the strength and dispositions of the enemy. As far as obtaining this information was concerned, our cavalry was not well handled. In the first fight at Plevna (July 20, 1877) we attacked with too few men and in detail. We did the same in the fights of July 31 and September 12, but to an even greater extent, and the attacks were carried out in too dense a formation, were not sufficiently prepared by fire-effect, and our own numerous cavalry and that of the Roumanians did practically nothing. The attacks on September 10 and 11, 1877, failed because our troops were badly distributed and untrained. I attached an appreciation of the work of our troops in the Turkish War as follows :

“In this war the staff work was not always successful. The troops often received orders too late, and time was wasted waiting for their receipt before commencing a move. Units arriving at night on the positions allotted to them did not always find the officers who should

have been waiting their arrival to guide them. Officers in command of troops were often not informed by the staff as to the enemy's strength and dispositions, or as to our own neighbouring columns. Lack of information was the principal cause of our disasters ; we sometimes attacked in entire ignorance of the enemy's strength and dispositions, and even partially so of our own.

“As an example of what our troops can do in an attack may be quoted the capture of Kars ; it is a very instructive case. Though the weak field-works of Plevna resisted our efforts for five months, at Kars neither strong parapets nor deep ditches could check our onslaught. Our gallant Caucasians advanced on the fortress by night ; they were well led, and always had a body of scouts skilfully thrown out in front, and they captured strongholds that had been termed ‘impregnable’ with great bravery.

“In the defence our troops have always fought well. Let us remember the defence of the Shipka Pass, and imitate it.”

After a short review of our errors in the Turkish War, I enumerated those which were still noticeable in our peace manoeuvres.

As operations developed the enemy's peculiarities became as well known as our own, so I was able in August, September, October, and December, 1904, to issue supplementary instructions.

Notwithstanding the number of our cavalry, and what our scouts had been able to do, we had not ascertained the general dispositions and strength of the enemy. The information brought

in by spies was exaggerated and unreliable. The result was that, when we had carried out any offensive operations, we had advanced without knowing anything of the enemy. My instructions ran :

Instructions issued in August.

“ In our attacks we have started the advance too rapidly, without strengthening positions already occupied, and without full artillery co-operation, and we have stopped the action at a period when we still had large numbers both in the general and regimental reserves. In retirements we have withdrawn to positions previously occupied by us without having taken steps to hold our ground on any of them, which preparation would not only have greatly assisted the retirement itself, but, what was far more important, would have enabled us to renew the attack.

“ Another point is, that many of our defensive positions have not corresponded to the numbers, when extended, told off to defend them. Nevertheless, the enemy’s frontal attacks, even if we hold quite chance positions, usually fail, and we have been obliged to abandon our ground owing to the turning movements which their superior numbers have made possible.

“ In attacking, especially among hills, the infantry must wait so that the assault may be prepared by fire, in order to get breath or to give time for the co-operation of a turning movement. There is also another and involuntary reason for halting—namely, the enemy’s fire. Owing to this, units halt, or, what is worse, begin to retire without orders ; what then usually

happens is this : A few men begin to trickle back from some company that has come under a particularly hot fire ; they are followed by their own company, which is in turn followed by the companies on either side, even though the latter may perhaps be holding strong ground. Such a moment is, indeed, critical, and unless some brilliant officer appears who possesses the secret of rallying retreating men and succeeds in making the company hold its ground, the action is lost. But besides setting a personal example to the men, a commanding officer must at once push forward some of his reserves to stop the rot among those retreating. The most important thing at such a crisis is the example set by the officers or the steadiest men, particularly by Cavaliers of the Order of St. George.* A company commander's example is everything to his company. Therefore, however deserving he may be in peace, a company commander who does not display personal gallantry in action should be instantly removed from his command.

“ The most effective method of guarding against a sudden emergency either in attack or defence—and this is particularly true in hilly country—is to have in hand a strong reserve, and not to make use of it too lightly. This we have not done in recent actions ; we have told off weak reserves, and used them up too quickly. Whole regiments have sometimes been sent in support where two companies or a battalion would have been ample. †

* [The Cross of St. George corresponds to our Victoria Cross, but is more easily won.—ED.]

† [Russian regiments in Europe, as a rule, consist of four battalions. East Siberian Rifle regiments in the late war had three.—ED.]

"In all kinds of operations officers in command must keep the forces on either flank, as well as their seniors, informed of everything that happens. We are, unfortunately, not accustomed to do this. Before an action the smallest details are reported, but as soon as an action begins we become so preoccupied with the fight that the most obvious duties are forgotten. Chief staff-officers of all grades will in future be held responsible for the frequent transmission of reports during an action."

The special attention of commanding officers was also called to the necessity for providing their men with hot food during action, and to the excessive expenditure of ammunition in our fights.

Instructions issued during September.

The following were the main instructions given by me while preparing for an advance after the fighting in August :

"It is a regrettable fact that so far, whenever we have taken the offensive, we have met with reverse. Owing to our lack of information, to which I have already drawn attention, instead of delivering a confident attack according to a clearly-thought-out plan, we have acted in a half-hearted manner. We often deliver our main attack too soon, and regardless of the enemy's intentions. Instances have occurred where we have detailed attacking columns as small as a battalion ; in others we have operated without any definite plan of action. Finally, there have

been cases where not enough determination has been shown in pressing forward to the objective."

The importance of gaining even slight successes over the enemy's advanced troops at the beginning of a forward movement, the fact that in the attack of positions turning movements should always be made in combination with frontal attacks, and the advantage of pushing on energetically when once an advance had commenced, were all points specially noted. The necessity of holding on determinedly to every yard of ground gained was accentuated, and leading units in a frontal attack were warned not to deliver the assault until the synchronous turning movement had been fully developed. Every use was to be made of fire-effect of every sort. I wrote:

"A glaring case of that lack of co-operation from which we suffer so much was the fight of September 2,* when the left column began the action far too soon, and therefore finished by retiring in disorder. This had the worst results on the success of the whole operation.

"I must again remind all ranks of the great necessity for economizing ammunition, especially gun ammunition. At Liao-yang we used up in two days our special artillery reserve of more than 100,000 rounds. The conveyance of gun ammunition to the front is very difficult, and batteries which have expended theirs become mere dead-weight to the army."

* [Liao-yang.—ED.]



GENERAL LINIEVITCH.

The peculiarities attendant on operations in a country covered with such crops as *kao-liang* were also reviewed in detail :

“ Any men leaving the ranks in action under pretext of accompanying or carrying away wounded men will be severely punished.

“ Companies and squadrons must be as strong as possible for an attack. To this end the most strict precautions must be taken to limit the number of men employed on extraneous duties and for transport work. The Cossacks are not to be employed as orderlies and escorts by the officers under whom they may be temporarily serving. Sound horses in possession of sick Cossacks should be taken from them, and made over to those who are horseless, but fit for duty.

“ It is to be regretted—and I have more than once commented on it—that commanding officers do not pay proper attention to the order that the soldier’s emergency biscuit ration, carried on the person, should remain untouched. This reserve ration is constantly being eaten, and no steps are taken immediately to replace it. Many commanding officers calmly allow the whole of the men’s portable reserve to be consumed under the pleasing conviction that it is the duty of someone else to bring up fresh supplies to the regimental commissariat.

“ The above instructions only touch on a few details of field-work. The main guide for action is the ‘Field Service Regulations,’ but these cannot, of course, meet every case which may arise in the entirely new circumstances under which we are now operating. I expect commanding officers of all ranks, therefore, to show greater initiative in the performance of their duties.”

My instructions issued in October included remarks on our offensive operations during the end of September. Amongst other things, I said :

“ I still notice faults in the method of conducting attacks. Thick lines of skirmishers are too closely followed by the supports and reserves. The formations have generally been ill adapted to the ground, and have been such as to form an excellent target. If this close-order formation had been assumed in these cases just before a bayonet charge, then, despite the heavy sacrifices entailed, there would have been some point in it, because of the additional force and impetus given to the assault ; but it was adopted when the attack was still at long range, and so caused useless and heavy loss. We should in such cases imitate the Japanese, and do what we used to in the Caucasus—make every use of cover. Every effort must be made to reconnoitre well, in order that advantage may be taken of every fold of the ground, and of every stick and stone, and the attack may be enabled to advance as close as possible to the enemy with the least possible loss. The way to do this is for individual men, or groups of men, to advance by short rushes till the attacking units are able to collect. On open ground, if the attacking infantry has to wait for the artillery preparation, it should entrench itself as rapidly as possible.

“ In retreating, the movement to the rear of large masses together afforded the enemy a splendid target, for which we suffered. Again, to avoid unnecessary loss in retirement, portions of a position have often been stubbornly held until a withdrawal could be effected under cover

of darkness. If the portion of ground on either side happens to have been already abandoned, and the Japanese are sufficiently mobile to make use of it, such isolated defence of any one section of a position might cost very dear. We must learn how to retire by day—by the same methods as laid down above for the attack (by rushes), and avoid close formations in doing it.

“I and other senior officers have noticed during an action hundreds and thousands of unwounded men leaving the ranks, carrying wounded to the rear. In the fights of October 12 to 15* I personally saw wounded men being carried to the rear by as many as nine others. This abuse must be put down with the utmost rigour, and until an action is over only the stretcher-bearers should take wounded to the rear.

“The Japanese are fortifying the positions along our front, converting villages, knolls, and hill-tops into strong, defensible points, and strengthening their positions with obstacles. These positions should be carefully studied, their strong points noted, and in every section of our line a plan of possible operations against the corresponding portions of the enemy’s position should be made. The early organization of the artillery preparation of any attack on these selected points is important.

“Detachments of sappers and scouts should be sent ahead of the assault to destroy the obstacles round fortified villages, which should be well shelled. Till the assault is made the advance should be under cover, and if the leading troops find they are not strong enough to capture the point on which they have been directed, they must hold on to a point as near to the enemy as

* [The Sha Ho.—Ed.]

possible, in order to press forward again when reinforced."

Finally, in my instructions issued in December, 1904, I recapitulated the most important points brought out by our recent experiences, such as—

“ 1. The necessity, in order to avoid loss, for our attack formations to be better adapted to the ground.

“ 2. Economy in artillery ammunition.

“ 3. The more intelligent employment of rifle-fire, and the necessity for volley-firing at night.

“ 4. The great value of night operations.

“ 5. Proper communication between all senior commanders.

“ 6. The necessity for the mutual co-operation of all arms, and the maintenance of touch in battle.

“ The surest road to success is the determination to continue fighting, even when the last reserve has been exhausted, for the enemy may be in the same, if not in worse plight, and what is not possible in daylight may be accomplished at night. Unfortunately, in recent fights, some commanders even of large forces have confessed themselves unable to carry out the operation entrusted to them, at a moment when they still had in hand big reserves which had not fired a shot.”

Of course, as soon as our disasters began, the papers started to accuse our troops of insufficient training, and they were not far wrong. In the first place, most of the men were reservists who had forgotten a great deal. In the second, this

war was our first experience of smokeless powder, of quick-firing artillery, of machine-guns, and of all the recent developments in means of destruction, and much was strange and unexpected. Our preconceived notions were upset, and we were baffled by the deadly nature of indirect artillery-fire, by the new attack formations—when advancing infantry is rarely visible, and one man at a time crawls up almost unseen, taking advantage of every inch of cover. Our troops had been instructed, but what they had learned varied according to the personal idiosyncrasies of this or that district commander. The stronger the officer commanding a district, the less did he feel bound to abide by the authorized method of instruction and training laid down in the existing drill-books. General Gripenberg was no exception to this. In spite of the regulation as to the use of volleys for repulsing night attacks ; in spite of war experience which in every way confirmed the necessity and value of volley-firing ; in spite of the Commander-in-Chief's instructions on this point, he made up his mind some days before a battle to re-teach the force under his command. He ordered the employment of independent fire at night. His "Instructions for the Operations of Infantry in Battle" [signed by him on January 4, 1905] printed and issued to the troops, aroused consternation and amusement throughout the army.

In this book it was actually laid down that volleys were only to be resorted to if the enemy suddenly appeared at close quarters, and that immediately after a volley a bayonet attack should be made. While condemning the method in which our troops operated at the Ya-lu, he, in the above "Instructions," gives a recipe for action whereby two of our battalions might destroy a Japanese division. After a summary of the amount of small-arm ammunition expended, he said :

"If our two battalions had been deployed and had opened rapid independent fire, the Japanese division would have been destroyed, and we should have won the day."

Such a simple matter did General Gripenberg consider the annihilation of a Japanese division ! But a few days later, when he moved against the Hei-kou-tai position with a strong force of 120 battalions, his own prescription proved to be valueless. In the first few days, when he was opposed by not more than two divisions, he was unable to take San-de-pu, got his troops into confusion, gave the enemy time to bring up strong reinforcements, and retired—to St. Petersburg.

As to the attack formation adopted by the troops arriving from Russia, the 41st Division had in particular been taught to work in very close formation, and not taught to make use of the ground. It came from the Vilna district,

which was commanded before the war by General Gripenberg. Our gunners also arrived at the front with only one idea of artillery tactics—to place their batteries in the open and make use of direct fire. For this we paid dearly in our very first fight.

CHAPTER X

REASONS FOR OUR REVERSES (*conclusion*)

Particular difficulties of the strategic situation—Defects in organization and *personnel*—Absence of a military spirit in the army, and lack of determination in carrying operations to a finish—Breakdown of our organization under the strain of active service.

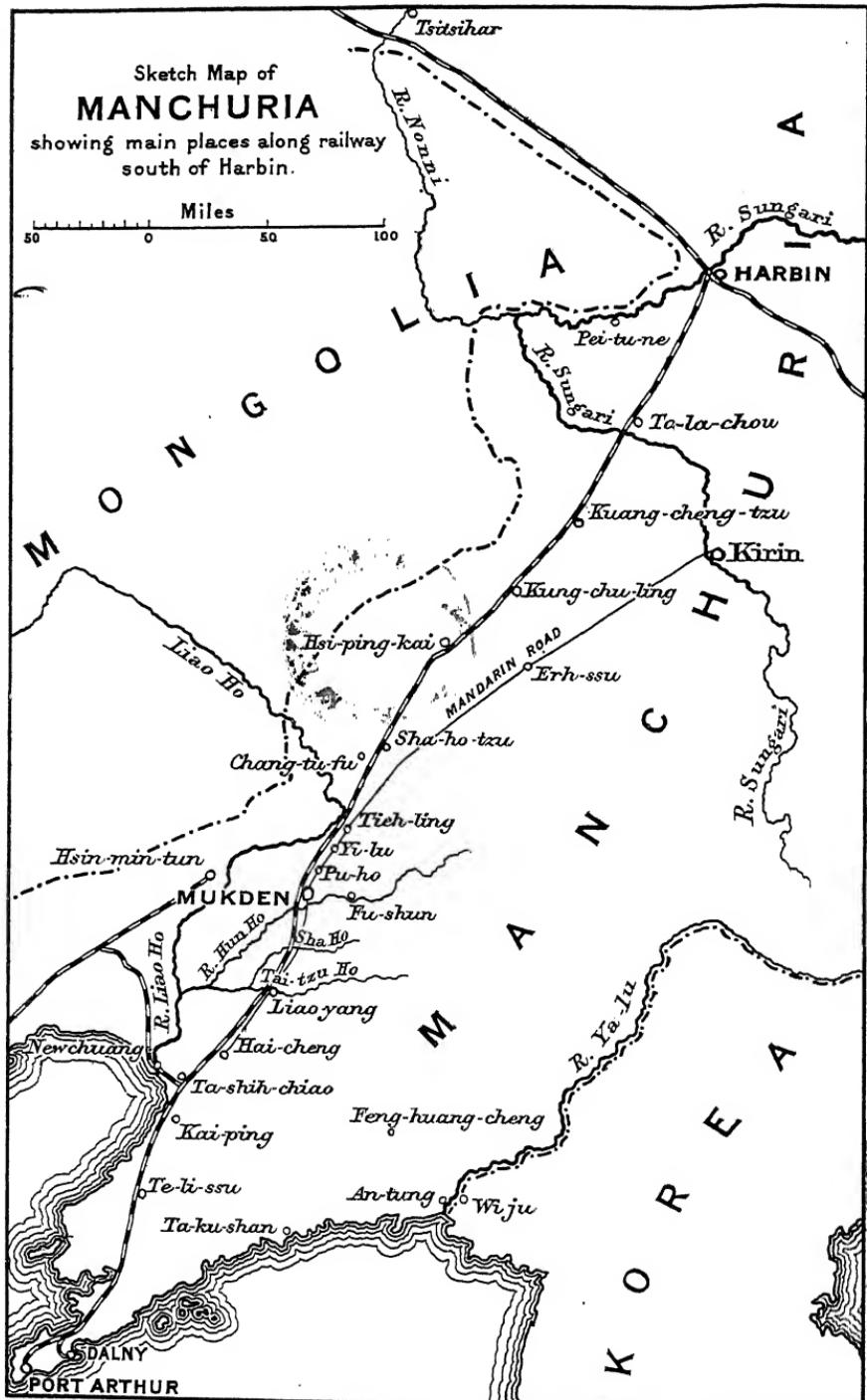
It is the duty of every Headquarter Staff to work out all possibilities, and, regardless of existing international relations, to provide for war in every probable quarter. Accordingly, our general line of operation in case of war with Japan had been duly drawn up in conjunction with the staffs of the Pri-Amur and Kuan-tung districts, and had been approved. The following is an extract from the paper dealing with the subject :

“Taking advantage of her military position—for she will be more ready for war than we are, and will therefore possess in the first period of the campaign a great numerical superiority both by sea and land—Japan can afford to define her objectives only generally. She may (1) confine her attention to the occupation of Korea, and

Sketch Map of
MANCHURIA

showing main places along railway
south of Harbin.

Miles
50 0 50 100



not take the offensive against us (which will most probably be the case); or (2) occupy Korea and also assume the offensive—

- (a) In Manchuria.
- (b) Against Port Arthur.
- (c) In the Southern Ussuri district (Vladivostok).

“Should Japan decide on the first alternative, then, taking into consideration the number of reinforcements we shall need, and the adverse conditions under which they will have to be conveyed to the front, we shall be forced at first to allow her to seize Korea—without retaliative action on our part, if only she will confine herself to occupying that country, and not develop plans against Manchuria and our territory. Should she choose the second alternative, we should be obliged to fight, and ought at once to make up our minds not to end the war until we have utterly destroyed her army and fleet. In view, however, of her numerical superiority and greater readiness during the first period of the struggle, we shall have to assume a generally defensive rôle. Any troops we may have within the theatre of operations should as far as possible keep clear of decisive actions, in order to avoid being defeated in detail before we can concentrate in force.

The numerical superiority of the Japanese fleet will probably prevent our squadron from any major active operations, and it will have to confine its action to the comparatively modest task of delaying the enemy's landing as much as possible. The defence of our own possessions should be carried out by the forces in the Southern Ussuri and the Kuan-tung districts,

which are formed for that particular object, and based on the fortresses of Vladivostok and Port Arthur. All the remaining troops, except those allotted to the line of communications and to maintain order in Manchuria, should be concentrated in the area Mukden-Liao-yang-Hsiu-yen. As the Japanese advance, these troops, while delaying them as much as possible, will gradually be compelled to retire on Harbin. If it becomes evident in the first period of the campaign that the whole Japanese effort is being directed against us in Manchuria, then the force which would be concentrated first of all in the Southern Ussuri district (1st Siberian Corps) would be transferred there."

The two years succeeding the date on which this paper was written saw great alterations in the strength, dispositions, and readiness of our military and naval forces in the Far East. There was also considerable change in the political conditions in Manchuria and in Northern Korea in consequence of the active policy which we had begun to assume. It was therefore found necessary in 1903 to consider a revision of the above scheme in accordance with these altered conditions. During those two years our strength in the Far East had grown by the increase in our land forces and fleet, and the improved efficiency of the railways. We have already seen what was done to improve the latter. It will suffice to say here that, instead of the twenty waggons available over the whole Chinese line in 1901,

the War Department in 1903 received seventy-five in the twenty-four hours, and hoped, on the strength of promises made, to have five through military trains by the beginning of 1904. The fleet, which in 1901 was considered inferior to the Japanese, was, at the end of 1903, stated, on the authority of the Viceroy, Admiral Alexeieff, to be so strong that any possibility of its defeat by the Japanese was inadmissible. But in those same two years Japan had not been idle, and had been unceasingly increasing her naval and military forces. In consequence of this the relative local strengths of the two nations were still much the same in 1903 as they had been in 1901, and it was thought prudent to adhere to the same general plan of operations as had been drawn up and approved two years previously. To give an official opinion of that time, I quote an extract from a memorandum I submitted to the Tsar on August 6, 1903 :

“ In the report which will be sent in from the Headquarter Staff, the conclusion arrived at after a careful appreciation of the resources of both nations is the same as that reached two years ago—namely, that in the event of war with Japan, we should act on the defensive ; that the concentration and general distribution of our troops should remain the same ; that although we may move troops on to the line Mukden-Liao-yang-Hsiu-yen, we cannot hold our ground in Southern Manchuria in the first period of the war if that region be invaded by the whole

Japanese army. We should therefore still count upon Port Arthur being cut off for a considerable period, and in order to avoid defeat in detail, should withdraw towards Harbin until reinforcements from Russia enable us to assume the offensive. But I may add that, while accepting the same plan of operations as we did two years ago, we can now have far greater confidence in the issue of a struggle. Our fleet is stronger than the Japanese, and as reinforcements will arrive now more quickly than they could have formerly, it will take less time for us to be in a position to advance."

In a memorandum by the Chief of the Head-quarter Staff, submitted to me on February 12, 1904—*i.e.*, a few days after the enemy had attacked our fleet at Port Arthur—General Sakharoff described the Japanese intentions as follows :

“ The Japanese plan appears to be—

“ 1. To inflict a crushing blow upon our fleet so as to paralyze its activity once and for all, and thus guarantee freedom of movement to their transports. To attain this end they have not hesitated to attack us before the declaration of war (*vide* the night operations of February 8 and 9). The transfer to them by the British of Wei-hai-wei also has given them an advantageous naval base right on the flank of any operations undertaken by our squadron.

“ 2. To capture Port Arthur in order to attain the same object—the destruction of our fleet.

“ 3. To advance on and capture Harbin, so as to isolate the Pri-Amur district from the rest of Russia, and to destroy the railway.”

Our hopes as to the promised improvement of the railway were unfortunately not realized, while our fleet, damaged by the enemy's onslaught before the declaration of war, was not only weaker than the enemy's, but failed even to perform the modest task expected of it in 1901. Consequently the concentration of our troops was a far slower business than we thought it would be, while the Japanese, having gained command of the sea, threw the whole of their army on to the continent. Thus, gaining the initiative on land as well as on the sea, and fired as they were with immense patriotism, the enemy commenced the war superior to us morally as well as materially. However, though the task before us was one of extreme difficulty, our resources were immensely superior to the enemy's, and the moment when we should become completely ready for the struggle was only postponed. Notwithstanding the unfavourable conditions under which we started, after fifteen months' fighting we were holding the Hsi-ping-kai positions, and, although we had not actually assumed the offensive, we had by no means retired as far as Harbin, which had been accepted as a possibility in the original scheme. If we had only possessed the determination necessary to carry this scheme right through, we ought not to have ended the war until we had utterly defeated the enemy. Therefore, whatever we

did accomplish can only be looked upon as preparatory to the decisive struggle. One of the assumptions of our original scheme of operations was that, if a strong Japanese force invaded Southern Manchuria, we should not be able, in the first period of the war, to hold it. In the event the whole Japanese army invaded that area, but the opposition shown by our troops at Liao-yang, on the Sha Ho, and at Mukden, was so effectual that, though the enemy gained possession of the greater portion of Southern Manchuria, they did not reassume the offensive against us for six months. The difficulties which the Japanese surmounted in advancing from Ta-shih-chiao to Tieh-ling cannot be compared to those which would have faced them, in the three defensive lines which we had constructed on the way to Harbin,* had they attempted to drive us to that place. I reiterate what I have so often said in the preceding chapters: though the war was brought to an end, the army was not beaten. Of the great force which lay ready on the Hsi-ping-kai position in August, 1905, one-half had never been under fire. Further on I will explain how it was that we never acquired the material and moral superiority necessary to defeat the enemy during the fifteen months that the war did last.

* [Hsi-ping-kai, Kung-chu-ling, and Kuang-cheng-tzu.
—Ed.

In the diary I kept when in Japan* I drew a diagram, with explanatory notes, to illustrate the Japanese question and show the possibility of our being able to defend our interests in Manchuria and Korea by force. I reproduce the diagram† and the notes *in extenso*:

“This diagram shows Japan’s comparatively favourable situation with regard to the theatre of operations. Her base—indeed, her whole country—is only about 600 miles by sea from our shores, and 135 from Korea.

“Our territory in Asia is so vast and so thinly populated that we shall be compelled to make European Russia, which is 3,400 to 6,000 miles distant, our base. For a protracted war with Japan it is evident that the single-line Siberian Railway will not suffice; we shall be obliged to lay a second track, and to increase the number of trains in the twenty-four hours. Also, as it runs for a considerable distance along the Chinese frontier and through Chinese territory, it cannot be relied on in the event of war with both China and Japan together.”

We were glued to the railway, and could not move away without risk of being left without supplies. Our field artillery and heavy four-wheeled transport carts were unable to travel over most of the hill roads. The summer rains made the movements of the army, with its heavy baggage trains and parks, extremely difficult; teams of twenty horses were harnessed to guns, and even empty carts had to be man-handled.

* [1903.—Ed.]

† [See next page.—Ed.]

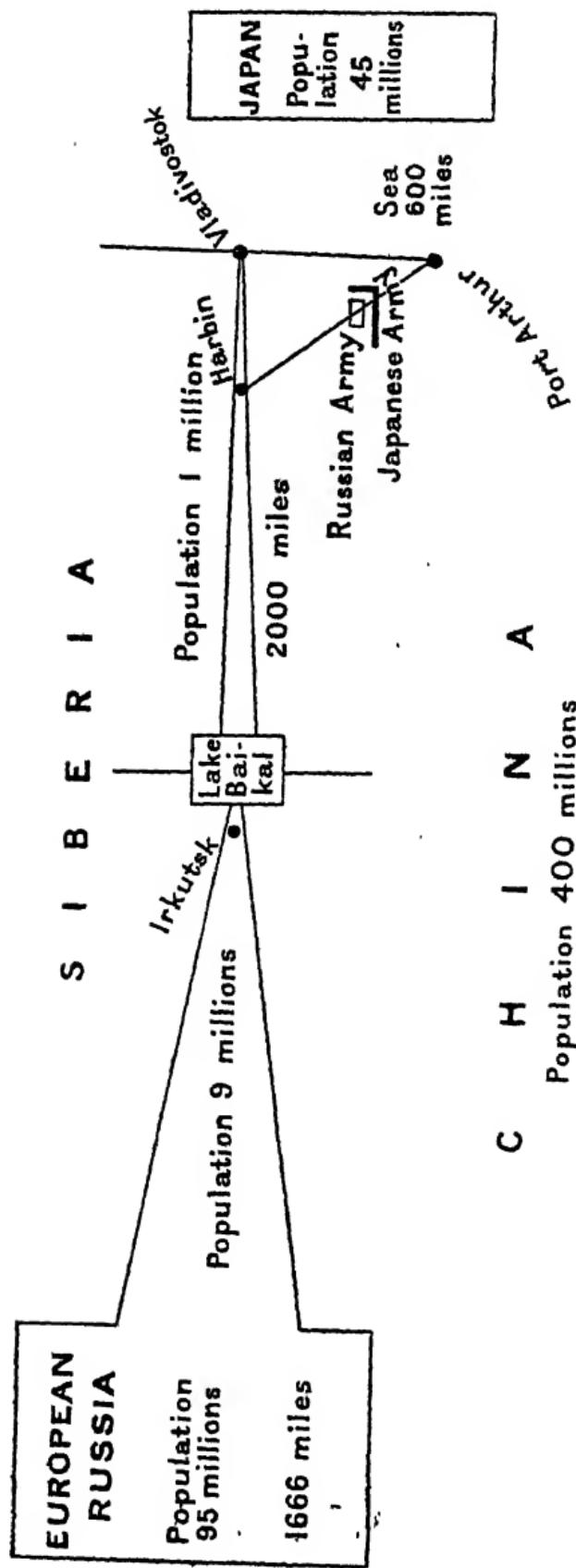


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE POSITION OF THE THEATRE OF WAR RELATIVELY TO RUSSIA AND JAPAN.

But of all our difficulties, the complete command of the sea obtained by the Japanese right at the beginning of the war caused the greatest. With their three armies they cut off Port Arthur, and began an advance from an enveloping base against our army, which was still tied to a railway-line. Our southward advance for the relief of Port Arthur was threatened by Kuroki's army based on Korea. Any movement against him was out of the question, especially for those corps which had arrived from Russia, as they were quite unused to hilly country. Our communications through Manchuria were only weakly defended, and might be cut at any moment by the Chinese, while those further west were liable to interruption (bridges destroyed, strikes, frost, etc.). The feeding of the army depended on local resources, which a hostile population could easily conceal, carry away, or even destroy; and as the amount of supplies obtained from Russia was extremely small and uncertain, the army might very easily have been starved. The chance actions at the Ya-lu and Te-li-ssu, in which our most reliable troops were worsted, still further improved the enemy's *moral*, and lowered ours.

With the absence of a proper military spirit among our troops, and the evil influence of the many seditious manifestoes against the war circulating amongst them; with the unsteadiness

shown by many units in the first fights, and with all the other defects above mentioned, a great numerical superiority was necessary—I must speak perfectly plainly—in order to defeat an enemy worked up to a pitch of fanatical excitement. But we did not obtain this superiority until it was too late—when we were waiting on the Hsi-ping-kai position, and negotiations for peace were being carried on at Portsmouth. Up to December we were fighting with what seemed a fairly large force, according to a tally of battalions; but these were greatly under strength, for in the most important early period of the war—from May to October inclusive—we lost very many men, and received but few drafts. In many cases the Japanese battalions were twice as strong as ours. While all our actions were hampered by insufficient information regarding the enemy, the intelligence we received as to what was happening in our rear—in Mongolia and in the Manchurian provinces—was so alarming as to compel us to detach a large force to protect our communications. Again, when the enemy became complete masters of the sea, we had to detail sufficient troops to guard against a landing in the Vladivostok and the Ussuri districts. All these things combined to complicate our position and give the enemy the initiative at the start, and right manfully did their whole nation strive to seize their advantage.

Their land communications were safe ; their sea communication with their base was quick and sure. We, on the contrary, could only put in the field a fraction of our land forces, and, till we could concentrate sufficient men for an offensive, were tied down to a definite course of action. We had—

1. To make certain of and protect the concentration of the reinforcements which were arriving, so as not to allow them to be destroyed as they came up.
2. To take steps to relieve Port Arthur.
3. To maintain order in our rear, and to guard the railway.
4. To feed the army—mainly on local supplies.
5. To guard the Ussuri district.

Had the Japanese got possession of our communications, a catastrophe unprecedented in military history might have resulted. Without any victory in the field, the mere destruction of the railway in our rear, combined with the cutting off of local resources, would have threatened us with starvation—and disaster. Such were the unfavourable conditions under which we fought for fifteen months, and our army was not only *not* completely defeated, but grew in strength, while our communication with Russia gradually became better secured and more efficient. We had always recognized the possibility of being driven back to Harbin and beyond ; but this never

happened, and we held on to Hsi-ping-kai. The situation could only have been improved in one way—by a rapid concentration of sufficient troops for, and an assumption of, an offensive all along the line. While these troops were collecting, each fight—quite independent of its actual result—would have really helped us if it had at all weakened the enemy. But our departure from our accepted plan of operations began at the commencement of the war, when, instead of fighting a rearguard action, General Zasulitch got seriously engaged against the whole of Kuroki's army at the Ya-lu, and was defeated.

In May, when the 3rd Siberian Division * had alone arrived at Liao-yang (besides the troops of the Pri-Amur Military District), the Viceroy, fearing for the fate of Port Arthur, instructed me to assume the offensive towards the Ya-lu against Kuroki's army, or southwards for the relief of the fortress of Port Arthur. But the inadequate force with which General Shtakelberg pushed forward, owing to ignorance of the fact that the Japanese were in superior strength, got drawn into a serious engagement at Te-li-ssu, and was defeated. With the arrival of all the units of the 4th Siberian Corps and one division of the 10th Army Corps, it seemed

* It was followed by the 2nd Infantry Division; 10th and 17th Army Corps; 5th Siberian Corps; 1st Army Corps, and 6th Siberian Corps.

possible to contain Kuroki's army, to concentrate fifty to sixty battalions rapidly in the direction of Ta-shih-chiao, and to attempt to hurl back Oku to the south. It seemed as if our army had a splendid chance of operating on interior lines. The enemy was strung along three lines of advance—Dalny, Kai-ping, Ta-shih-chiao (Oku); Ta-ku-shan, Hsiu-yen, Ta-ling, Hai-cheng (Nodzu); Ya-lu, Feng-huang-cheng, Fen-shui-ling, Liao-yang (Kuroki). We occupied the central position—Liao-yang, Hai-cheng, Ta-shih-chiao—with advance guards thrown forward on to the Fen-shui-ling heights. We might have been able, by containing two armies and deceiving the enemy by a demonstration, to strike the third army in force. A blow delivered at Kuroki or Nodzu did not promise success, owing to our lack of training in, and unpreparedness for, hill warfare [we had no mountain artillery, our baggage was heavy, and we were uncertain of receiving supplies, owing to the insufficiency of transport material]. The only other course was to strike at Oku, who was based on the railway, but such an operation was risky, because Kuroki and Nodzu might have driven back our screens and fallen on our communications. On June 26 and 27, when only one brigade of the 31st Division of the 10th Army Corps* had arrived at Liao-yang, the

* The leading units of the 10th Army Corps arrived on June 30.

Japanese on the eastern front (Kuroki and Nodzu) themselves took the offensive and seized the passes (Fen-shui Ling, Mo-du Ling, Da Ling) on the Fen-shui-ling heights. We opposed them in insufficient strength, and did not even make them disclose their numbers. The troops of the eastern force withdrew towards Tkhavuop, and General Levestam's force to Hsi-mu-cheng. Our screens were thus situated as follows: on Kuroki's line of advance, only two marches from Hai-cheng; on Oku's line of advance at Ta-shih-chiao, four marches from Liao-yang.* Our position was critical, particularly if the information we had received as to the Japanese collecting in considerable force to operate against Hai-cheng was confirmed. Still, if we were able to strike a rapid blow at Oku, we might rob the enemy of the initiative, and after forcing back Oku's army, have fallen on Nodzu. After we had driven back these troops, Kuroki's position would have been so far forward and so far separated from the other groups that the danger of his breaking through to Liao-yang would have been minimized. But for such decisive operations the first requisite was the concentration of sufficient troops for offensive operations against Oku.

At the end of June we had altogether available against the three Japanese armies 120 battalions,

* Sixty miles by a road which the rains had made very difficult.



GENERAL BARON KITEN NOGI.

and were inferior to the enemy both in the number of battalions and the number of men. Our position was made worse by an epidemic of dysentery which broke out amongst the troops at Ta-shih-chiao, and swept off a considerable number of men. The Krasnoyarsk Regiment* was the greatest sufferer, having as many as 1,500 men down with the disease at the end of the month. But the main thing which delayed any advance on our part was the rain, which made all moves difficult, and some places absolutely impassable for transport. It was even difficult to convey supplies to our various stationary forces over distances of less than a march. In spite of the lack of pack-saddles, wheeled transport had to be given up for pack transport, and not even pack-animals could do more than seven to eleven miles in the twenty-four hours. On the Liao-yang-Lang-tzu-shan road things were still worse, for the bridges over the mountain streams had been carried away, and communication between the eastern force (3rd Siberian Corps, under Count Keller) and Liao-yang was interrupted for some time. Far, therefore, from being ready to advance, the officers commanding the 1st and 4th Siberian Corps found the greatest difficulty in rationing their troops, and on June 29 asked that they might be withdrawn

* [A European Russian regiment contains four battalions.—Ed.]

towards the positions near the railway at Tashih-chiao, and that the country east of the line might be left to the cavalry, with a few infantry units in support.*

General Count Keller was persistent in his demands that communication should be maintained between his force and Liao-yang, but we had neither the material, the means, nor the time to comply with his wishes, which would have meant the laying of a light railway and the strengthening of the road bridges. As I feared that the Japanese might make a fresh forward movement on Hai-cheng, I ordered thirty-nine battalions to concentrate near Hsi-mu-cheng on June 29. The short march from Hai-cheng was accomplished on the 28th with great difficulty through a sea of mud, and on the 29th Hsi-mu-cheng was temporarily cut off by the mountain streams in flood. The feeding of the troops collected there was found to be so difficult that as soon as it was known that the enemy, instead of advancing, had retired towards the Fen-shui Ling (Pass), certain units were ordered to return to the railway. Taking advantage, on July 18, of the screen formed by a portion of the 17th Army Corps, we attempted to advance against part of Kuroki's army in the hope of forcing our way forward and gaining a partial success. For this Count Keller had under his

* My report of June 20.

command forty-three battalions, but the attempt failed. He stopped the action before any large number of our troops had become engaged. On the 29th Oku's army took the offensive; we had to evacuate Ta-shih-chiao and Newchuang after a feeble resistance, and allowed Oku and Nodzu to join hands. When on July 23 I inspected the units of the 10th Army Corps, who were holding the position near Hu-chia-tzu, I found out how absolutely incapable of operating in hilly country the troops newly arrived from Russia were. Before sending them forward, it was necessary to train them in hill fighting, and to provide them with pack transport. On July 31 all three Japanese armies advanced, and we concentrated after a series of battles round Liao-yang. Here, in spite of our resistance, the three armies were able to join hands. Their attacks on the left bank of the Tai-tzu Ho were repulsed, but owing to the unfortunate nature of our operations on the right bank, the conditions became so unfavourable to us that I was obliged to order a retirement to Mukden. The withdrawal was conducted without the loss of a single gun or transport cart, while the enemy lost in men more heavily than we did. In the detailed accounts I have given in the first three volumes of the operations at Liao-yang, on the Sha Ho and at Mukden, our difficulties and the causes of our defeats are explained. The course

of events showed that our original scheme of operations was quite a correct forecast, for in it the probable necessity of retiring towards Harbin had been foreseen. Indeed, matters at Liao-yang, on the Sha Ho, and especially at Mukden, might have been very much worse for us than they were, and might have necessitated our retirement on Harbin early in October, 1904, when, as a matter of fact, we remained in Southern Manchuria.

Clausewitz has truly laid down that an army should be inseparably connected with its base, but our base was Russia, more than 5,000 miles away. The way that this one difficulty alone was overcome will perhaps be eventually appreciated at its true worth. The very complicated attendant circumstances demanded great and patient efforts on the part of the whole nation in order to turn them to our advantage. Our reverses were explicable, and even in our defeat we exhausted our enemy, while ourselves increasing in strength. It was inevitable that a different complexion would have been put on the face of things as soon as circumstances became more favourable to us.

DIFFICULTIES IN ORGANIZATION.

The war showed that our army organization gave us too small a percentage of actual combatants as compared with the total numbers whom we rationed. By this I mean that, in spite of the immense numbers that we main-

tained in the face of great difficulties, we were unable to put enough men into action to win. Our establishments of all arms, of parks, hospitals, transport corps, field bakeries, staffs, and all offices and institutions, include a large percentage of non-combatants, which was swollen in the last war by the absence of any organized line of communication troops, the necessity of carrying out a large amount of railway construction, and of appointing officers and men to newly formed supply and transport units. Even so the number of non-combatants laid down in the establishments for each unit was not sufficient to perform the duties that fell to them, and it became necessary, for reasons which will be mentioned later, to detail combatants for domestic duties. As but few non-combatants were wounded in action, the proportion of them to the combatant element became still greater after every big fight. It was usual, when a battle was imminent, to order back to their units all men who were on extra-regimental duties, but in spite of all the steps taken, the fighting number was never more than 75 per cent. of the number of men on the strength. In the beginning of April, 1905, when we were preparing the theatre of war up to the River Sungari, the combatant element of the 1st Manchurian Army actually fell to 58 per cent. of the strength. As in previous wars, the infantry, of course, did

most of the fighting, and also carried out by far the greater number of fatigues and extra duties. As they also lost more men in action, their fighting strength was proportionately more reduced than that of the other arms.* In April, 1905, the percentage of rifles in the 1st Manchurian Army to the total number of men that had to be rationed was 51.9 per cent. When the convalescents returned to the ranks, its strength amounted by the beginning of December to 192,000 men, of whom 105,879 carried rifles; but we could only put a much smaller number in action owing to various duties, fatigues, etc. In August, 1905, the number of rifles was 58.9 per cent. of the total of men rationed.

To obviate this state of affairs, and to insure that companies should be as strong as possible in action, I gave orders on June 9, 1905 [when I was commanding the 1st Manchurian Army], that out of each of the four battalion regiments, not more than 369 combatants should be detailed for extra duties. This figure included 128 stretcher-bearers, 35 bandsmen, and 48 men for baggage guards. In addition to this, a large number of men were required for road and bridge

* The officer commanding the 2nd Manchurian Army stated that the whole war strength of his force (total of rifles, sabres, guns, with twenty-five men to a gun, and ten to a machine-gun) constituted, on an average, only half the actual numbers.

work on the communications, for guards for the different stores, for working parties to assist the supply and medical services, for policing villages, for duty with the improvised transport units, etc. True, this had its compensations, for we were able thus to get rid of the 2nd Category reservists from the ranks ; but we felt the loss in the number of rifles we could place in the firing-line. Of course, there were, in addition, the sick, the wounded, and the convalescents with units and in hospital. In this way the total of all ranks classed as combatants but absent from the firing-line, or not doing combatant work, amounted on the average to 800 men out of every four-battalion regiment, or about one-quarter of its strength. To carry on the campaign without properly organized units on the communications, without sufficient camp guards, without making roads and bridges, without allowing men for transport and baggage duties, was impossible. Notwithstanding the good payment we offered, the native population did not come forward to work freely, especially when fighting was imminent. A certain number were employed on transport, but they were very unreliable, and bolted at the first alarm, often taking their horses and carts with them. During the battle of Mukden, for instance, the whole of the hired transport of the 1st Army, consisting of 400 carts, entirely disappeared. Our attempts

to obtain Russian hired labour were a failure, though the rates of pay offered were liberal enough.

The extent to which transport duties were responsible for weakening the fighting strength of the army can be seen from the fact that, during the fifteen months of war, 122 transport units were formed, and 8,656 carts, 51,000 horses, and 20,000 pack-animals purchased. For duty with these, 328 officers, 22,000 men, 1,700 hired civilians (Russians), and 9,850 Chinamen were employed. These 122 units were improvised under adverse conditions and from small cadres, and, as they had to be raised in a hurry, there was nothing for it but to appoint to them men and officers from the army.

The strength of units also decreased most marvellously in action. This was partly due to losses, but often also due to the habit of men leaving the firing-line to carry wounded to the rear. This was sometimes done with permission, sometimes without. Very often the men who retired did not have this excuse.

I have pointed out (in Chapter VII.) that the army did not receive its drafts in time, and that we had to fight below strength; this shortage was still further increased for the following reasons: The war establishment of a company was 220 rifles; but from this number had to be deducted the shortage with which units arrived

at the front,* the sick, and those detailed for camp and other duties—a procedure which, though unprovided for by Regulations, was permitted by officers in command. Accordingly companies often went into the very first fight at a strength of only 160 to 170 rifles. For a long time the personal supervision exercised by commanding officers to insure that units took the field as strong as possible was very slack. It seemed, on the contrary, as if their efforts tended all the other way, for they left men behind whenever they possibly could, particularly those who were most necessary—*i.e.*, those on whom depended the payment and regular rationing of the men. Thus, with the exception of the regimental adjutant, the staff of a regiment rarely went into action; while of the men who are classed as combatants, the company clerks, armourer-sergeant, cooks, officers' servants, the butcher, the cattle guards and the officers' grooms, were always left behind. The formation of a force of mounted scouts took away a certain number of men, and stretcher-bearers and bandsmen of course did not fight. Finally, owing to the peculiar nature of the country, donkeys for carrying water were provided for each company, and these required men to look after them, and one or two entire companies from each regiment had to be detached

* This amounted in some units to as much as 20 per cent. in men, and 30 per cent. in officers.

as baggage guard owing to the insecurity of our communications. Commanding officers thought it necessary to leave behind so many men for the above purposes that the orders given for them to accompany the firing-line were either quite neglected, or only half carried out. It was soon found that eight bearers per company were far too few for carrying wounded, and men from the ranks were allowed to help their wounded comrades to the rear. From this cause companies often literally melted away during a fight. There were many instances where unwounded men went to the rear under pretext of carrying away the wounded, at the rate of six, eight, or ten sound soldiers to one wounded! The return of these willing helpers to the front was not so prompt as it might have been, and was difficult to control. The result was that a company hotly engaged usually only had 100 or less rifles after a few hours' fighting, although its losses might have been inconsiderable.

Meanwhile, as we only asked for drafts strong enough to bring companies up to the established war strength, without taking into account the above extraordinary leakage, the drafts we received did not bring companies up to their proper strength in action.

The reason why the lines of communication in the field* took so large a number away from

* [Behind and between armies.—ED.]

our fighting-line was that we had no proper communication units, and the large working parties necessary for the light railway, road and bridge work had to be drawn from the fighting troops. It was entirely owing to the care with which the commanding officers on the line of communications—especially those in the engineers—had been selected that we were able to fight, and at the same time to make roads of some hundreds of miles' length for intercommunication between corps. For instance, at the end of 1904 and the beginning of 1905, when the 1st Army was south of the Hun Ho, out of 180,000 men, 7,000 were on the line of communications. At the beginning of July, 1905, when the strength of the 1st Army had gone up to 250,000, and the communications stretched back a length of 150 miles to the River Sungari, there were 10,000 men employed on them—*i.e.*, 4 per cent. of the army's strength. The length of the road made on the Hsi-ping-kai positions by the 1st Army alone amounted to 1,000 miles, with bridges of more than 20 feet breadth and 50 feet span, and nearly 40 miles of embankment. Though the greater part of this was done by hired Chinese labour, even in this comparatively quiet period the troops of the 1st Army were on “works” for a period of 30,000 working “man days.”*

The supply service, also, as has been men-

* [One man on one full day's work.—ED.]

tioned, absorbed a large number of men. The field commissariat were unable, at the beginning of the campaign, to work the bakeries owing to the lack of men. All the bakeries, therefore, were taken over by the troops, who had to build the ovens, buy flour, and bake the bread themselves. Thus the eight field bakeries (of which four were in Liao-yang) which arrived in Harbin and Liao-yang without transport or men had at first to be taken over by the troops. But from May, 1904, onwards the Governor-General insisted on most of the work being handed back to the Commissariat Department. The energy of General Gubur, the Field Intendant of the army, in obtaining supplies locally rescued it from the difficult position in which it was beginning to find itself owing to the constantly increasing number of mouths and to the inadequate number of supply trains. Assisted by Generals Bachinski and Andro, General Gubur took full advantage of all the resources of the country. For this, again, officers and men were necessary to guard supply depôts and collect and escort herds of cattle, and were taken from the combatant troops. A large part of the forage and meat the troops obtained for themselves, but this entailed the provision of strong foraging parties, which went far afield and often remained away a considerable time, and of permanent guards to tend the regimental cattle. When the troops of the Pri-Amur district

were concentrated in Manchuria, they left a number of men behind as "base details" to look after their buildings and property. Touch was maintained between these base details and the units at the front during the whole war; from them the troops received their warm clothing in winter, and to them it was sent back in the summer of 1905. This all meant the employment of soldiers. Finally, men had to be told off for topographical work, reconnaissance, and as escorts for officers and other persons, etc.

The number for all the above duties taken together, with the wounded and sick present with units, constituted on an average 400 to 500 men per regiment. This, added to the 369 authorized "employed" men above mentioned, brought the total up to 800. Obviously such a loss of numbers must be taken into consideration in appreciating the fighting work of the army.

Other things which contributed to the same result were the immense development of the different staffs and administrations, the auxiliary institutions, such as supply parks and hospitals, the congestion on the roads caused by the masses of baggage which had collected, and the fact that both our wheeled and pack transport carried less than it was supposed to owing to the hilly country and the all-prevailing mud. After heavy fighting our army corps, especially those consisting of three-battalion regiments, amounted

to less than 10,000 to 15,000 rifles, and yet the immense organization, military parks, baggage, and transport, etc., for a full corps had still to be guarded. Even the regimental standards, which should have been a source of strength and encouragement in the fight, were in many cases prematurely taken to the rear under a guard of a company or half a company, the troops at the front being weakened by this number at the most important moment of an action. I was obliged to make a ruling that in action the standards should be kept with the regimental reserves, and that steps should be taken that they should be a symbol of victory in the most critical phases of a fight (as used to be the case in former wars), and a source of strength instead of weakness to the units which possessed them.

In September and October, 1905, instead of one Manchurian army, three were formed (the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd); they were all intended for operations in the Mukden area, and were based on the one railway which constituted their common line of communications. The powers of the army commanders were as laid down by regulation. Officers in command of armies were given (Field Service Regulations, 1890) almost all the powers formerly vested in the Commander-in-Chief. As regards fighting, it was laid down that "in conducting military operations the officer commanding an army should be guided by the

instructions of the Commander-in-Chief, but should act independently." This latitude would be very convenient in operating in Europe, where each army would have its own independent line of communications; but in the conditions which existed at Mukden—one common position and one line of communications for all—and with a difference of views existing between the army commanders as regards the conduct of affairs, the arrangement was, to say the least of it, extremely unsuitable. A difference of opinion upon some vital matter might easily arise, when it might be necessary either to order the army commander to carry out an operation which he thought unnecessary, inopportune, or even dangerous, or else to ask for him to be replaced. For instance, a fortnight before we assumed the offensive on January 25, after everything had been settled and all plans drawn up, General Gripenberg suddenly surprised me by his opinion—that the campaign was lost; that we should retire towards Harbin hold that point and Vladivostok, and thence move with two armies in other directions. In which directions, he was unable to explain. The Commander-in-Chief's instructions on many essential points, such as the danger of holding non-continuous lines* and the necessity for having

* [General Kuropatkin's views on this point appear to have changed, see p. 270.—ED.]

strong army reserves, were not carried out because the responsibility for holding the defensive positions occupied by the armies rested on the army commanders. Thus my endeavours to send at least twenty-four battalions—if not the whole of the 17th Army Corps—from the 3rd Army into the reserve failed, as the officer commanding that army thought that his position in the centre would not be safe if the regiments of the 17th Corps, which was in advance, were replaced by reserve regiments of the 6th Siberians. As mentioned in the account of the operations of the 14th Infantry Division at Hei-kou-tai, notwithstanding my instructions to conceal our intention of attacking the enemy's left flank as long as possible, General Grippenberg, for no apparent reason, and without even asking permission, assumed the offensive almost two weeks before the time that I had fixed by moving the 14th Division towards Ssu-fang-tai (on the heights by San-de-pu) on January 13, and by moving the 10th Army Corps into the advanced lines between the right flank of the 3rd Army and the River Hun on the 16th. By this the enemy was informed of our intentions before we began our forward movement, and the front of the 2nd Army was spread over thirteen miles.

With the exception of General Linievitch, our army commanders were unnecessarily sen-

sitive to interference with their powers, and in cases where orders would formerly have been issued to corps commanders it now became necessary to reckon with the personal opinions of army commanders, and to guard against offending their susceptibilities. After the pomp and parade of General Gripenberg's departure from the army, the relationship between the army commanders and the Commander-in-Chief became still more strained. How jealously they looked after their rights, and how strangely they interpreted their own powers, is illustrated by the following incident: On February 19 I sent for the three army commanders and their chief staff officers, in order to ascertain their views as to the plan of operations which should be undertaken under the unfavourable conditions brought about by the fall of Port Arthur and General Gripenberg's unsuccessful operations at Heikou-tai. The following courses were open to Nogi's army, no longer required in the Kuantung Peninsula: it might join the four armies already in the field against us; it might, together with the divisions formed in Japan and the troops in Korea, form a force of seventy to eighty strong battalions for operations against Vladivostok, or, landing at Possiet Bay, it might march against Kirin and Harbin, so as to outflank our position at Mukden. I had also been continually receiving reports from General

Chichagoff to the effect that the enemy had invaded Mongolia, and, aided by numerous bands of Hunhuses, had begun to attack the railway in our rear, which had forced me to weaken the army by detailing an infantry brigade and four Cossack regiments to reinforce the railway guard and safeguard our position. In spite of these reports, Generals Linievitch and Kaulbars expressed the opinion that we ought not to change our plans, and should carry out the orders I had issued on January 25—namely, to fall on the enemy's left flank. But when my Chief of Staff asked the officer commanding the 2nd Army—who was to commence the operation—how he proposed to employ his cavalry, Kaulbars,* looking upon the question as an interference with his authority, became annoyed, and said much that was unnecessary and quite beside the point. As it turned out, the Chief of the Staff had every reason to be anxious as to the employment of this Arm, for its work in the battle of Mukden was anything but satisfactory.

The very large powers vested in army commanders in the matter of bestowing distinctions was both unnecessary and harmful. They were authorized to award the fourth class Order of St. George on the recommendations of committees convened by them ; they could give the

* [Who had succeeded Gripenberg in the command of the 2nd Army.—Ed.]

Distinguished Service Cross to private soldiers, and award the Orders of St. Anne, second, third, and fourth classes, and St. Stanislav, second and third classes, with swords and ribbons. As the forces were lying so close together, it was very soon noticed that the distribution of decorations in the different armies varied very much, being in accordance with the personal predispositions of the different commanders. In one army they were so lavishly bestowed as to excite general derision, and their value was much lowered in consequence. By far the worst offender in this respect was one well-known general, who for one and the same engagement [Hei-kou-tai] decorated divers officers with two Orders apiece, while, contrary to regulations, he bestowed the Distinguished Service Cross to fifteen and more men per company and battery. I jotted down in my diary my impressions after inspecting units of the 2nd Army. Amongst other things, I noted that he had awarded thirty Distinguished Service Crosses to a battery, of which only seventy men had been in action and even then scarcely under fire. Indeed, to my astonishment, as they stood on parade almost the whole of the front rank were wearing crosses. The officer in command told me that he had been ashamed to announce these rewards to the men, and to have to try and select certain specific acts for them. I told the men I hoped that they would show themselves

worthy of these marks of distinction in the fights to come!

The large independent powers possessed by the army commanders in matters of supply were also superfluous in a case where there was only one railway and one tract of country in which to procure supplies. The only result was that prices were raised all round by the fact that the different armies were bidding against each other. In this respect General Gripenberg's behaviour was most incomprehensible. As meat was very scarce in December, I advised him to cut down the meat ration from 1 pound to $\frac{1}{2}$ pound. Instead of this, by an order issued on January 3, he increased it to $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds per man per day. With the conditions that obtained generally on the Sha Ho, and if our army corps had been organized on a broader basis, there would have been no necessity whatever for three separate army commanders with their special powers; but they were appointed. And yet, after the disaster of Mukden, it was the Commander-in-Chief who was generally held responsible for everything.

DEFECTS IN *PERSONNEL*.

As regards the *personnel*, I will give in full the impressions recorded in my report on the 1st Manchurian Army at a time when the experiences of the war were fresh in my mind;

my opinion in the main agrees with those of other senior commanders.

(a) *The Command.*—No appreciation of the senior commanders—that is to say, of the work done by individual corps, divisional, and brigade commanders—can or, indeed, ought to be made at present. The personal element is too prominent. We must wait till personal feelings have died away, so as to be able to draw impartial conclusions based on authenticated facts, and on facts alone, as to what happened and who was to blame. All the same, it may be said that the most pronounced weak points amongst our senior commanders, especially in the first period of the campaign, were their lack of initiative, their ignorance of the method in which an attack should be conducted, and their want of determination. There was never any co-ordination in the operations of large units, which were really quite remarkable for their absolute disconnection. Indifference as to the position of neighbouring forces was the rule, and a tendency to accept defeat before a fight was really lost was painfully evident. Even our best commanders preferred their neighbour to be told off for the attack, while they themselves remained in support. If a column were retiring under difficulties, any other forces close at hand would withdraw also, instead of coming to its assistance; and there was practically no instance of a bold

forward movement. The work of the regimental commanders was certainly better than that of those higher up, but it was impossible not to notice that they did not possess the power of making the most of a situation and finding their way about. A regimental commander detached on special duty could rarely make his arrangements without the assistance of an officer of the General Staff; he could not, as a rule, read a map himself, much less teach those under him how to do so. This was especially the case at the beginning of the war, and had considerable influence on the conduct of operations, as regiments often either arrived late at their rendezvous or went to points where they were not wanted. The lack of eye for country is partly explained by the fact that our officers were quite unused to hills. Though this defect certainly became less marked as time went on, it was still perceptible in the operations round Mukden, and even afterwards.

Though the officers lacked a proper military spirit, they were generally good in other ways, particularly those of the regular army. The best proof of their gallantry is furnished by the number of losses sustained by the 1st Army from November, 1904, to September, 1905, from which it will be seen that their proportion of killed and wounded was considerably higher than that of the men.

	Officers.		Rank and File.	
	Numbers.	Percentage to Average Strength.	Numbers.	Percentage to Average Strength.
Killed ...	167	4·1	4,779	2·5
	905	23·8	27,425	14·6
	89	2·1	5,684	2·9
	1,151	30	37,888	20

The losses in this army for the whole period of the war were somewhat higher :

	Officers.	Rank and File.
Killed ...	396	10,435
Wounded ...	1,773	56,350

With the exception of those who had volunteered for the front, the officers of the reserve were not nearly so well qualified as those of the regulars ; they were much behind them in tactical training, and did not always perform their duties with the zeal which should be shown on active service. Many ensigns of the reserve turned out unsatisfactory, having accepted this rank purely to escape becoming private soldiers upon mobilization ; they had no sympathy with the military profession, and hated soldiering. They were absolutely without training, and some of them had no authority whatever over the

men. The ensigns and acting ensigns* promoted from the ranks for distinguished service were excellent in every respect. Having been selected from the rank and file, they usually appreciated their rank, and had considerable authority amongst the men; they got on well with the officers, and proved efficient and hard-working assistants to the company commanders. The extent to which the acting ensigns sacrificed themselves to duty is evinced by the fact that of 680 in the 1st Army in February, 192 were killed and wounded in the Mukden battle—*i.e.*, more than 28 per cent. The moral tone of the officers was quite satisfactory; during the whole period of the war only nineteen were dismissed for unbecoming conduct. In reporting on the work done by the officers of the General Staff, the majority of the senior officers in command of troops expressed the opinion that their theoretical training and intelligence stood very high, and that their work was unselfish, but that they were not sufficiently in touch with the troops, and lacked the personal, practical knowledge required to enable them to judge properly how much might be expected of men, and in what way an order would be carried out—a knowledge which is necessary if small errors are to be avoided in the transmission of orders, etc. They recommended that, to give these staff-officers the

* Or sergeant-majors.

necessary practical training, they should do most of their service with troops of all three Arms, and only a part of their service on the staff; while, to prevent them being looked upon by the troops as mere clerks, they should be relieved of the mass of clerical work that now falls to the General Staff. As in other bodies of men, so amongst these officers are to be found some specially fitted for field-work, and others, again, who prefer purely staff duties, and in my opinion the two classes should be separated. Generally speaking, the General Staff officers in the 1st Army did everything that was required of them. From November, 1904, to September, 1905, their losses in killed and wounded amounted to 12 per cent. of their strength ; if the casualties which occurred before the formation of the 1st Army are taken into account, the percentage works out as much as 25·7. During the whole of the above time only four were sent back to Russia on account of sickness, while the majority of the wounded returned to the front.

As regards the senior commanders, many general officers who had commanded independent units with great success in peace-time were quite unfitted to take command of large units under the stress of war. Few had even had sufficient peace practice in the actual command of divisions and corps, and many were not up-to-date in their knowledge of modern war requirements. The

general characteristic displayed by most was their lack of the power of forming a decision and a disinclination to accept responsibility. Some arrived at the front actually holding important commands for which they were—either through ill-health or for other reasons—quite unfitted. From three army corps, composed of veteran regiments which had arrived earlier than others in the theatre of war, there retired, or were sent back, after the first fights, one corps, four divisional, and several brigade commanders. Amongst the reasons which contributed to complicate the conduct of operations were the frequent changes in the Commander-in-Chief, of whom there were three in nineteen months. From the beginning of the war till the end of October, 1904—for eight and a half months—Admiral Alexeieff was in supreme command ; from the end of October to the middle of March, 1905—four and a half months—I was in command ; from the middle of March till the end of the operations—six months—General Linievitch was in command.

The fact that I only commanded for four and a half months out of nineteen, and that this period was in the middle of operations, was not taken into account by those who last year flooded Russia with pamphlets and newspaper articles, apparently written with the sole object of proving that I, both as Commander-in-Chief and as War

Minister, was the person mainly responsible for our misfortunes. In a letter to the Tsar, dated February 21, 1906, from the village of Shuan-chen-pu, I wrote on this point as follows :

“ I am aware of the serious accusations levelled against me in the Press. Though there are among them many to which I would scorn to reply, I should be happy to accept entire responsibility for the disasters which have overtaken us, but that such a course would be historically incorrect. It would also be a mistake, because it would lessen the general desire of the whole army for a thorough investigation of all the causes of our partial defeats, so that we may be able to avoid them in the future.

“ I venture to say ‘partial’ defeats, because there could be no possible suggestion that our land forces in Manchuria suffered defeat similar to that sustained by the fleet. When peace was concluded we had an army of almost one million men, still holding positions occupied by us after the Mukden battle, and ready, not only for the defensive, but for a most active advance.

“ Information that reached us from Japan showed that the sources from which she had been drawing the men for her armies were drained dry, that her finances had been completely exhausted, that discontent at the long-drawn-out war was already making itself felt among her people, and that for these reasons her army could not reckon on further success against our superior numbers. Therefore, the most searching and exhaustive study of all our weak points cannot shake the belief prevalent in the army that our troops in Manchuria would have been victorious if only the war had been continued.

“ It will be for the future historian to decide whether the troops we put into the field before March, 1905, would have sufficed for victory.

“ Nowadays, with the complicated machinery of modern armies, the personality of the supreme commander is less important than it was. Without trusty, able, and energetic subordinates, without a spirit of initiative amongst all ranks, without a superiority in numbers, and, what is most important, without a military spirit amongst the troops and patriotism in the whole nation, the duty of a Commander-in-Chief is so difficult that it is far too much for a merely talented leader. It may be said that a military genius would have overcome the moral and physical difficulties we had to encounter. Possibly ; but an Alexeieff, a Kuropatkin, a Linievitch, a Grippenberg, a Kaulbars, and a Bilderling were unable to do so.

“ I venture to remind Your Imperial Highness that, on receiving the orders appointing me to be Commander-in-Chief, I did not joyfully express my gratitude. I replied to the effect that it was only a dearth of commanders which led Your Majesty to select me. If I still firmly believed in victory after the Mukden battle, I had, indeed, good grounds for so doing.”

The author of the cleverly written article entitled “ All about Commanders ” writes as follows :

“ The absence of initiative, the habit of always relying upon superiors, and only acting when ordered to from above, are characteristics of junior commanders which made the work of those at the head of the army more difficult.

The value of the time element in war also was forgotten."

The modern theorist in strategy, Blume, says: "Even the greatest genius in a supreme commander cannot replace independent action by individual leaders."

Even during actual operations numerous newspaper articles appeared, well calculated to discredit the officers. They were represented as overbearing, rude, dishonourable drunkards. Indeed, one of the most gifted of our writers—Menshikoff—went very far in this respect, for he wrote of the "blunted sense of duty, intemperance, moral laxity, and inveterate laziness" of a large body of men who never spared their lives and performed their duty almost religiously. In a diatribe against military life by M. Kuprin, called "The Duel," private soldiers were represented as being treated with the greatest cruelty, and it was implied that it was the custom for our officers to slap and beat their men on company parades. The writer concluded by saying that the time would come when the officers would be caught and beaten in byways, when women would deride them, and soldiers refuse to obey their orders. In the great family of officers—as in other classes—there are, of course, bad specimens, but no generalization can be made from this as to the class as a whole. If some officers were seen

drunk on the lines of communications or at Harbin, it is not fair to jump to the conclusion that all officers got drunk. They should be judged after they have been seen in action, in the trenches, and on the line of march, not only, as they often were, by what happened in the rear. But it is much easier to sit in St. Petersburg or Harbin and hurl abuse than it is to watch matters at the front. I have alluded to the large proportion of killed and wounded amongst the officers, which shows that their gallantry has not grown less than it used to be, and they certainly looked after the welfare of the soldier in a way that was unprecedented. The men were fed, clothed, cheered up, and kept in good fettle. The junior officers were zealous, soon found their feet under new and strange conditions, and as they grew accustomed to the local topography, became good map-readers. The most severe critic must acknowledge that the standard of our officers, both staff and regimental, has been much raised since the Russo-Turkish War.

But, according to the opinion of these same observers, the private soldier has, on the contrary, deteriorated during these twenty-seven years, for, though a better man physically, he is morally a worse man than he used to be. As I have remarked, the men with the colours were quite reliable, but many of the reservists—

especially the 2nd Category men—required much supervision both in action and out of it, the most difficult material to handle being that from the manufacturing centres and large towns. Soldiers nowadays require more looking after than they did formerly, when but few were literate. Up to the present, thank God, our officers still have a good hold upon the men, based on mutual respect; but great endeavours were made at the beginning of the war to undermine this.

Kirilloff and others have made a dead set against the behaviour of the officers of our General Staff in the late war, but the majority worked most unselfishly, and did good service commanding units or on the staff. A large number distinguished themselves by their professional zeal and gallantry, while some found a glorious death in action. At their head may be mentioned General Kondratenko, the hero of Port Arthur. Among the killed also were the gallant General Count Keller, Staff-Officers Zapolski, Naumenko, Jdanoff, Pekuti, Vasilieff, Mojeiko; and of those who died from wounds were Andreeiff and Yagodkin. Among the wounded were four divisional commanders—Lieutenant-Generals Rennenkampf and Kondratovitch, Major-Generals Laiming and Orloff; also Staff-Officers Markoff, Klembovski, Gutor, Rossiski, Gurko, Inevski, etc. Altogether, about

twenty officers of the General Staff were killed and forty wounded. The hostile attitude of the Press towards the officers, the endeavour of divers persons to undermine their authority, the indifference of the intelligent classes in Russia to what was happening in Manchuria, and especially the anti-Government campaign, which was conducted with the object of creating a mutiny among the troops, was hardly calculated to raise the soldiers' *moral*, or to encourage them to perform acts of heroism. There was no military spirit in the army.

The Rank and File.

The rank and file, like the officers, were of two classes: those serving with the colours, and the reservists. The former were in every respect good; they were steady in action, enduring and well trained; but the reservists were on a much lower plane altogether. In the first place, the older men were unable to stand the arduous conditions of field service, coupled with the rigours of the Manchurian climate. They suffered greatly from sunstroke and heart affections when marching among the hills, and during the hot weather. At the battles of Ta-shih-chiao, Hai-cheng, and Liao-yang, these men fell out in such numbers that their units became quite immobile, and absolutely useless for any offensive operations. Moreover, the 2nd Category reser-

vists did not know the rifle, and had forgotten everything they had once learnt when with the colours, and it required real hard work to instruct and train them up to the level of the serving soldiers. I have mentioned their unsteadiness. Units which were almost entirely composed of these men—that is to say, those units which had been formed by expanding the reserve regiments—were very unsatisfactory: it was almost impossible to get them into action. The regiments of the 4th Siberian Corps, which did so splendidly at Ta-shih-chiao, Hai-cheng, and Liao-yang, were an exception; they were composed entirely of Siberian reservists, who, though surly fellows and poor marchers, were men of character and very steady in action. The drafts composed of young soldiers were magnificent. Most of them had only just done their recruits' course, were single men, and possessed both staying power and activity, and, being regular soldiers, were accustomed to field-service conditions. Unfortunately, it was only after the battle of Mukden that these drafts began to arrive. But these young soldiers who did so well in small actions would have done still better in a decisive engagement.

The general feeling of discontent which already prevailed in all classes of our population made the war so hateful that it aroused no patriotism whatever. Many good officers hastened to offer their services—which was only natural—

though all ranks of society remained indifferent. A few hundreds of the common people volunteered, but no eagerness to enter the army was shown by the sons of our high dignitaries, of our merchants, or of our scientific men. Out of the tens of thousands of students who were then living in idleness,* many of them at the expense of the Empire, only a handful volunteered,† while at that very time, in Japan, sons of the most distinguished citizens—even boys fourteen and fifteen years of age—were striving for places in the ranks. Japanese mothers, as I have already said, killed themselves through shame when their sons were found to be physically unfit for military service. The indifference of Russia to the bloody struggle which her sons were carrying on—for little-understood objects, and in a foreign land—could not fail to discourage even the best soldiers. Men are not inspired to deeds of heroism by such an attitude towards them on the part of their country. But Russia was not merely indifferent. Leaders of the revolutionary party strove, with extraordinary energy, to multiply our chances of failure, hoping thus to facilitate the attainment of their own unworthy ends. There appeared a whole literature of clandestine publications,

* [On account of student disorders that had led to the closing of the Universities.—ED.]

† Medical students.

intended to lessen the confidence of officers in their superiors, to shake the trust of soldiers in their officers, and to undermine the faith of the whole army in the Government. In an "Address to the Officers of the Russian Army," published and widely circulated by the Social Revolutionists, the main idea was expressed as follows :

" The worst and most dangerous enemy of the Russian people—in fact, its only enemy—is the present Government. It is this Government that is carrying on the war with Japan, and you are fighting under its banners in an unjust cause. Every victory that you win threatens Russia with the calamity involved in the maintenance of what the Government calls 'order,' and every defeat that you suffer brings nearer the hour of deliverance. Is it surprising, therefore, that Russians rejoice when your adversary is victorious ?"

But persons who had nothing in common with the Social Revolutionary party, and who sincerely loved their country, aided Russia's enemies by expressing the opinion, in the Press, that the war was irrational, and by criticizing the mistakes of the Government that had failed to prevent it. In a brochure entitled "Thoughts Suggested by Recent Military Operations," M. Gorbatoff referred to such persons as follows :

" But it is a still more grievous fact that while our heroic soldiers are carrying on a life-and-death struggle, these so-called friends of the

people whisper to them: 'Gentlemen, you are heroes, but you are facing death without reason. You will die to pay for Russia's mistaken policy, and not to defend Russia's vital interests.' What can be more terrible than the part played by these so-called friends of the people when they undermine in this way the intellectual faith of heroic men who are going to their death? One can easily imagine the state of mind of an officer or soldier who goes into battle after reading, in newspapers or magazines, articles referring in this way to the folly and uselessness of the war. It is from these self-styled friends that the revolutionary party gets support in its effort to break down the discipline of our troops."

Reservists, when called out, were furnished by the anti-Government party with proclamations intended to prejudice them against their officers, and similar proclamations were sent to the army in Manchuria. Troops in the field received letters apprising them of popular disorders in Russia, and men sick in hospitals, as well as men on duty in our advanced positions, read in the newspapers articles that undermined their faith in their commanders and their leaders. The work of breaking down the discipline of the army was carried on energetically, and, of course, it was not altogether fruitless. The ideal at which the leaders in the movement aimed was the state of affairs brought about by the mutinous sailors on the battleship *Potemkin*. These enemies of the army and the country were aided by certain

other persons who were simply foolish and unreasonable. One can imagine the indignation that the M—s, the K—s, and the K—s would feel if they were told that they played the same part in the army that was played by the persons who incited the insubordination on the *Potemkin*; yet such was the case. Firm in spirit though Russians might be, the indifference of one class of the population, and the seditious incitement of another, could hardly fail to have upon many of them an influence that was not favourable to the successful prosecution of war.

Commanding officers in the Siberian military districts reported, as early as February, that detachments of supernumerary troops and reservists had plundered several railway-stations, and later on regular troops, on their way to the front, were guilty of similar bad conduct. The drifting to the rear of large numbers of soldiers—especially the older reservists—while battles were in progress was due not so much to cowardice as to the unsettling of the men's minds, and to a disinclination on their part to continue the war. I may add that the opening of peace negotiations at Portsmouth, at a time when we were preparing for decisive operations, unfavourably affected the *moral* of the best in the army.

M. E. Martinoff, in an article entitled "Spirit and Temper of the Two Armies," points out that

“ . . . even in time of peace, the Japanese people were so educated as to develop in them a patriotic and martial spirit. The very idea of war with Russia was generally popular, and throughout the contest the army was supported by the sympathy of the nation. In Russia, the reverse was true. Patriotism was shaken by the dissemination of ideas of universal brotherhood and disarmament, and in the midst of a difficult campaign the attitude of the country toward the army was one of indifference, if not of actual hostility.”

This judgment is accurate, and it is evident, of course, that with such a relation between Russian society and the Manchurian army it was impossible to expect from the latter any patriotic spirit, or any readiness to sacrifice life for the sake of the Fatherland. In an admirable article, entitled “The Feeling of Duty and the Love of Country,” published in the *Russki Invalid* in 1906, M. A. Bilderling expressed certain profoundly true ideas as follows :

“ Our lack of success may have been due, in part, to various and complicated causes, to the misconduct of particular persons, to bad generalship, to lack of preparation in the army and the navy, to inadequacy of material resources, and to misappropriations in the departments of equipment and supply ; but the principal reason for our defeat lies deeper, and is to be found in lack of patriotism, and in the absence of a feeling of duty toward and love for the Fatherland. In a conflict between two peoples, the

things of most importance are not material resources, but moral strength, exaltation of spirit, and patriotism. Victory is most likely to be achieved by the nation in which these qualities are most highly developed. Japan had long been preparing for war with us; all her people desired it; and a feeling of lofty patriotism pervaded the whole country. In her army and her fleet, therefore, every man, from the Commander-in-Chief to the last soldier, not only knew what he was fighting for, and what he might have to die for, but understood clearly that upon success in the struggle depended the fate of Japan, her political importance, and her future in the history of the world. Every soldier knew also that the whole nation stood behind him. Japanese mothers and wives sent their sons and husbands to the war with enthusiasm, and were proud when they died for their country. With us, on the other hand, the war was unpopular from the very beginning. We neither desired it nor anticipated it, and consequently we were not prepared for it. Soldiers were hastily put into railway-trains, and when, after a journey that lasted a month, they alighted in Manchuria, they did not know in what country they were, nor whom they were to fight, nor what the war was about. Even our higher commanders went to the front unwillingly, and from a mere sense of duty. The whole army, moreover, felt that it was regarded by the country with indifference; that its life was not shared by the people; and that it was a mere fragment, cut off from the nation, thrown to a distance of 6,000 miles, and there abandoned to the caprice of Fate. Before decisive fighting began, therefore, one of the contending armies advanced with the full expectation

and confident belief that it would be victorious, while the other went forward with a demoralizing doubt of its own success."

Generally speaking, the man who conquers in war is the man who is least afraid of death. We were unprepared in previous wars, as well as in this, and in previous wars we made mistakes; but when the preponderance of moral strength was on our side, as in the wars with the Swedes, the French, the Turks, the Caucasian mountaineers, and the natives of Central Asia, we were victorious. In the late war, for reasons that are extremely complicated, our moral strength was less than that of the Japanese; and it was this inferiority, rather than mistakes in generalship, that caused our defeats, and that forced us to make tremendous efforts in order to succeed at all. Our lack of moral strength, as compared with the Japanese, affected all ranks of our army, from the highest to the lowest, and greatly reduced our fighting power. In a war waged under different conditions—a war in which the army had the confidence and encouragement of the country—the same officers and the same troops would have accomplished far more than they accomplished in Manchuria. The lack of martial spirit, of moral exaltation, and of heroic impulse, affected particularly our stubbornness in battle. In many cases we did not have sufficient resolution to conquer such

antagonists as the Japanese. Instead of holding with unshakable tenacity the positions assigned them, our troops often retreated, and in such cases our commanding officers of all ranks, without exception, lacked the power or the means to set things right. Instead of making renewed and extraordinary efforts to wrest victory from the enemy, they either permitted the retreat of the troops under their command, or themselves ordered such retreat. The army, however, never lost its strong sense of duty; and it was this that enabled many divisions, regiments, and battalions to increase their power of resistance with every battle. This peculiarity of the late war, together with our final acquisition of numerical preponderance and a noticeable decline of Japanese ardour, gave us reason to regard the future with confidence, and left no room for doubt as to our ultimate victory.

In both Russian and foreign papers numerous articles have appeared in which the Commander-in-Chief has been accused of a lack of determination in the conduct of various battles. Without any real basis for their statements, critics have represented that orders to retire were for some unknown reason more than once given by him at a moment when victory lay in our hands. Comments upon his indecision and frequent change of orders were so common that the idea became universal that it was Kuro-

patkin, and Kuropatkin alone, who prevented the army and corps commanders from defeating the enemy.

My first three volumes supply the answer to the most serious of these accusations: in them are described the tremendous efforts we had to make to prevent our operations ending worse than they did. I have never been one of those who believe that an order once given should not be countermanded or modified. In war circumstances change so quickly, and information received so frequently turns out to be false, that it would be fundamentally unsound to insist, in spite of changed conditions, on keeping exactly to an order once issued. An excellent example of this is given by the operations at Hei-kou-tai. The order received by the officer commanding the 1st Siberians to rest his troops on January 27, and to occupy the line Hei-kou-tai-Su-ma-pu-Pei-tai-tzu, was founded on the incorrect supposition of the commander of the 2nd Manchurian Army that San-de-pu had been captured. The former was more than once told not to attack. Yet, even though news was received that San-de-pu had not been taken, he insisted in carrying out the orders given, in which, by a mistake, a village held in force by the enemy was appointed as our halting-place. The result is known: we fought all day, lost 7,000 men, and at daybreak on January 28

were compelled to retire. With regard to the accusation that the late Commander-in-Chief* constantly countermanded his own orders, it is interesting to note that General Gripenberg, in his article, "The Truth about the Battle of Hei-kou-tai," points out that, although he did not agree with him as to the necessity for retiring the right flank of the 2nd Army to take up a more concentrated position, he did not express this opinion to the Commander-in-Chief, because he and all his staff knew that Kuropatkin would never countermand an order once given.

Upon the point as to whether we might have defeated the Japanese at Liao-yang or Mukden we shall remain unenlightened, in spite of the publication of my book, till we know in detail the actual movements of the Japanese in these actions. As regards Liao-yang, I can only express my personal opinion. An important decision, such as that leading to an order for troops to retire, cannot be given upon the inspiration of a moment. All the attendant circumstances have to be taken into account—the results of the previous engagements ; the physical and mental condition of the troops ; the strength and dispositions of the enemy ; the results which he may attain if the fight is continued ; the reports from the front, flanks, and rear ; the

* [General Kuropatkin himself.—ED.]

extent to which the reserves have been depleted, their readiness for action; the amount of ammunition in hand, etc. At the battle of Liao-yang Kuroki's army, in addition to Nodzu's, might easily have been pushed across to the right bank of the Tai-tzu Ho, just as the Japanese boldly threw the greater part of Oku's army, in addition to Nogi's, across on to the right bank of the Hun Ho at Mukden. This was all the more possible because our attempt to assume the offensive with the troops stationed on the left bank on September 2 ended disastrously. If there is no hope of worsting an enemy by an offensive counter-stroke, it is very important for a defending force, circumstanced as we were,* to retire in good time, and not to hold on until an orderly retirement becomes impossible to carry out. We retired under very difficult conditions along roads deep in mud, but not a single trophy was left behind, not a prisoner, not a gun, not a transport cart.

If we had delayed a single day, our retirement might have resembled that of the 2nd and 3rd Armies, which were in so awkward a plight at Mukden. For the reasons explained in my third volume, the 2nd Army was, on March 7, almost surrounded on flanks and rear. Great efforts were necessary in order that we might extricate

* Our communications were threatened, and the Yentai Mines on the flank were in the enemy's hands.

ourselves from the position in which we were placed without being utterly defeated. But these efforts were not made, and the situation of our whole force on March 7, 8, and 9 became worse, and the danger of a considerable part of the 2nd Army being surrounded by Nogi's troops still more imminent. Comparing the condition of our men with that of the Japanese on March 7 and 8, as well as the positions occupied by the two forces on the 8th, and taking into account the moral superiority of the Japanese, I should have given up hope of a victorious issue from the battle on the 7th and 8th, and have arranged for a retirement to Tieh-ling before the army became disorganized. The future historian will probably accuse me of having held on too long. I did not give the order to retire till March 10, and according to events and the opinion of my staff, the order should have been given a day earlier. If we had retired on the 9th, the army would probably have fallen back in complete order without losing anything (except wounded); indeed, we might have taken with us a fairly large number of prisoners and captured guns and machine-guns. In my report upon the battle of Mukden to His Majesty the Tsar, I acknowledged that I was primarily responsible for our reverse, and admitted that I should have more accurately gauged the difference between the men of the two forces

and the qualifications of the commanders, and that I should have been more careful in making my decisions. Hoping against hope to defeat the enemy, despite the disastrous operations of the 2nd Army, between March 2 and 7, I gave the order to retreat too late. I should have abandoned all hope of eventual victory at Mukden a day sooner than I did, and our withdrawal would have been effected in good order. Thus, the general conclusion regarding the battles of Liao-yang and Mukden could, in my opinion, be expressed as follows: If we had retired from Liao-yang a day later than we did, the result would have been much the same as at Mukden; if we had retired from Mukden a day sooner, the result would have been much the same as at Liao-yang.*

I might also have been blamed for not holding on longer to Tieh-ling and fighting there, and for ordering the troops to retire on to the Hsing-kai position. My reply is given in detail in my third volume. It is sufficient to say here that, when it was decided to retire from Tieh-ling on March 12 and 13, according to the officers commanding those units of the 2nd and 3rd Armies which suffered most in the battle of

* The retirement from Liao-yang was orderly, while that from Mukden more nearly approached a rout; but it is not certain that the Russians were really beaten at the former place when the decision to retire was made.—ED.]

Mukden, we only had an effective strength of 16,390 rifles in 114 battalions.* If I had accepted battle there under such conditions, it would have been most dangerous, as we might have completely lost the cadres of many units. How long it would have taken us to re-form for a new battle can be judged from the fact that the officer commanding the 3rd Army stated before a committee assembled as late as May 17 [two months after the retreat] that he thought the acceptance of a general action even then on the Hsi-ping-kai position itself was inadvisable.†

I will bring the present chapter to a close by quoting literally my farewell address to the officers of the 1st Manchurian Army. In this address, with fresh impressions of all that we had gone through and had actually felt during the war, I outlined those of our defects which prevented us defeating the enemy in the time at our disposal. But while indicating our weaknesses, I also brought out the strong points of the troops which I had commanded—points which gave every reason for a belief that we should have won in the end.

* [Sic. This seems almost incredible.—Ed.]

† [The portion of this chapter which immediately follows deals in great detail with the breakdown of the unit organization. It has been separated from the text, and is given in Appendix II.—Ed.]

“To the Officers of the 1st Manchurian Army.

“In a few days the 1st Manchurian Army will be broken up, and I must now bid farewell to the glorious troops which I have had the great honour to command for two years. Upon you fell the arduous duty, in the beginning of the war, of withstanding the attack of a numerically superior enemy, so as to gain time for our reinforcements coming from Russia to concentrate. You had the good fortune to be present at the battles of the Ya-lu, Te-li-ssu, Ta-shih-chiao, Yang-tzu Ling, Lang-tzu-shan, and also at the long-drawn struggles of Liao-yang, the Sha Ho, and Mukden, and by your conduct during those fights you earned the praise of the rest of the army.

“With a comparatively weak establishment of five and a half corps (160 battalions), or an average fighting strength of 100,000 rifles and 2,200 officers, the 1st Manchurian Army lost up to March 14, 1905 :

	Officers.	Rank and File.
Killed	...	395 ... 10,435
Wounded	...	1,733 ... 56,350

or a percentage of killed and wounded amongst the officers of 91, and amongst the rank and file of 67, per cent. of the average war strength. In the independent units the losses in killed and wounded were :

	Officers.	Rank and File.
34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment	89 ...	3,243
36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment	73 ...	2,531
3rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment	102 ...	2,244

	Officers.	Rank and File.
4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment	61	... 2,170
23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment	50	... 2,290
1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment	71	... 1,920

“ The particularly gallant conduct in action of the officers is apparent from the fact that the percentage of killed and wounded is considerably higher than that of the men, while many single units proved that it is possible to continue fighting after a loss of two-thirds of the fighting strength. And yet, despite these sacrifices, despite all our efforts, we were unable to beat the enemy. Undoubtedly we had to fight against a very brave, energetic, and most martial foe. So careless were the Japanese of life that they piled the bodies of their comrades on our obstacles, and endeavoured to reach our positions by climbing over these masses of corpses. For a long time also they were able to bring superior forces against us. But we became tempered by misfortune, and gained wisdom by experience, and our numbers grew until we finally became so strong in mind and spirit last summer that victory seemed assured.

“ The intervals of comparative peace between the great battles were employed in strengthening the army, and many positions up to and including Mukden were fortified with immense trouble. After that battle the defence of the left flank of the whole force was entrusted to you, and three very strong defensive lines were constructed by your labours up to the River Sungari. These lines, particularly the first and second, were, on account of their fortifications and the nature of the ground, in every way suited either for a desperate defence or for the attack.

Although our army was not quite ready to assume the offensive by last May, it would have welcomed orders to advance. The enemy, shaken by their losses at Mukden, kept their positions for six months, and waited for us to move forward. We inaugurated many improvements based upon our previous experiences in the war, and the tactical training of the troops made immense progress. We not only filled up our weakened ranks by means of the drafts which reached us, but expanded all the rifle regiments into four battalions. In the way of reinforcements, the 1st Army received the 53rd Infantry Division, the Cossack Infantry Brigade, and the Don Cossack Division.

“The firing-line of the 1st Army was in August last stronger than it was at the beginning of the war, before the September battles on the Sha Ho, and, thanks to the great exertions of those in command, and the unselfish work of the medical services, the health of the army remained excellent throughout. It was, indeed, fortunate, for if any great sickness had broken out we should, owing to the few drafts then arriving, only have had very weak cadres for the field. It was absolutely essential, therefore, that no expense or efforts should be spared in order to keep every man fit for the ranks, and I am happy to say that our common efforts met with unusual success, for our losses from sickness were less than in killed and wounded. In the 1st Manchurian Army we had lost up to August 14, 1905, 2,218 officers and 66,785 other ranks killed and wounded in action, and 2,390 officers and 58,093 other ranks from sickness. I draw your attention to the fact that while the percentage of losses from action should naturally

be higher among the officers than the men, they ought, on account of their better living, to lose less from sickness. The converse was the case with us, which shows that our officers were not sufficiently hardy, and did not know how to preserve their health. To this we must pay particular attention.

“ In material matters the army was also excellently situated in August. Clothing and equipment of all sorts were on the spot and plentiful, while all technical supplies had accumulated. Never have we been such a formidable force in every sense as we had become by the summer of 1905, when we were suddenly informed of the unhappy negotiations at Portsmouth, and that peace had been concluded. Doubtless this was necessitated by the state of the interior of Russia ; but it was heart-breaking for the army. I remember with what grief the news was received by all ranks. Life seemed to die out of our bivouacs, and all our minds were filled by one sad thought—that the war had ended before the enemy had been beaten. Looking back on the trials we have recently gone through, we can find consolation in the feeling that we have done our duty to Tsar and country as far as has lain in our power ; but for many reasons the time given us has turned out to be insufficient. These reasons we must fearlessly search out, and discover what—beyond mere numerical inferiority—prevented our success before peace was concluded. Before all others, I, your senior commander, am guilty because I did not succeed in rectifying our many moral and material defects during the war, and in making the most of the undoubted strong points of our troops. The material defects are known

to all of us—the small number of rifles in the firing-line per company [partly owing to lack of care to put as many men as possible into action], the insufficiency [at the beginning] of mountain artillery, the lack of high explosive shells, of machine-guns, and of technical stores of all sorts. By last August the majority of these deficiencies had, through the great exertions of the War Ministry, been made good. Our moral defects I attribute to the different standards of training among the troops, their inferior technical preparation, and the great numerical weakness of units in action. We also suffered much from inadequate reconnaissance of the enemy's position before a battle, and the resulting vagueness as to how to conduct the action [particularly in the attack]; and, most important, from the lack of initiative and independent thought in individual commanders, the absence of the military spirit in officers and men, of dash, of mutual co-operation between units, and of a general determination to carry out a task to a finish at any sacrifice. The tendency to accept defeat too soon—after only the advanced troops had suffered—and of retiring instead of repeating the attack and setting an example, was highly detrimental. Such retirement, instead of calling forth increased efforts from the neighbours, in most cases only served as a signal for their own retreat.

“Generally speaking, there was in all ranks a great dearth of men of strong military character, with nerves tough enough to enable them to stand the strain of an almost continual battle lasting for several days. It is evident that neither our educational system nor our national life during the last forty to fifty years has been

of a nature to produce men of strong independent characters, or more would have appeared in our army when wanted. Now the Tsar has given us the blessing of freedom. The nation has been released from the leading-strings of a bureaucracy, and can now develop freely, and direct its energies to the good of the country. Let us hope that this blessing of freedom, coupled to a well-thought-out system of education, will raise the material and moral forces of the Russian nation, and produce in every sphere of national activity stalwarts who are enterprising, independent, possessed of initiative, and strong in body and soul. By an infusion of such the army will be enriched. But it is not possible for the army idly to await results which are the work of a generation. Knowing now our strong and weak points, we can, and ought to, start on self-improvement without delay. The war has brought out many men [especially amongst all ranks of the 1st Army], from modest company officers up to corps commanders, on whose energy, zeal, and ability the Russian nation can rely; and I notice with pleasure that not a few of those amongst the 1st Army have received good appointments in the Far East and in Russia. This should serve as a fresh proof that the Tsar is diligently watching our efforts, and is losing no time in employing the most worthy of you to the advantage of the whole army.

“ You have first-hand knowledge of the difficult conditions generally under which war is now conducted, and of the moral and physical effort that is required to carry on an almost continuous battle for several days. You also know by experience the exact value in action of all kinds of technical equipment. All this

makes it necessary for you to endeavour to perfect yourselves. With the exception of the cadet corps, our schools take no pains about the physical development of children; consequently, many of our officers, as was evident in the war, are physically feeble. Pay attention to gymnastics, to fencing, to singlesticks, and to musketry. An officer should not be a mere spectator of the physical exercises of the men—a thing I have often noticed—but should himself set the example to those under him.

“ The relations between officers and men have always been of the closest. Like fathers to the men, our officers have won their affectionate respect. Remember that to our soldiers the word ‘father-commander’ is not merely an empty phrase; they believe in it. Remember, also, that a commander only wins the heart of his soldiers when he is their father-commander. It is quite possible to be strict and at the same time look after the men’s welfare, for our soldiers are not afraid of severity, but respect it; in the majority of cases a just severity is a deterrent against crime. But the simple-minded soldier is particularly sensitive to injustice, and soon sees through any deceit practised on him. You who shared with the men all the hardships and dangers of field service are very favourably situated. The men having seen you in action—always in your place, giving an example of unselfishness—will forgive much, and will follow you through fire and water. These links which bind the ranks must be carefully maintained, and officers who have been in the field with units must not be removed from them unless absolutely necessary. Guard the military traditions acquired by regiments, and do your best

to preserve the memory of the gallant deeds done by companies, squadrons, or batteries collectively, or by individual members of them. Keep in close touch with the private soldier ; try to win his full confidence. You will gain it by your constant care of and your affection for him ; by your strict, and at the same time fatherly, relations to him ; by knowing your work ; and by your own example. Only by these will you be able to take advantage of all his good points, to correct his defects, and guard him from the harmful influences which will be more numerous in the future than ever. The recent cases of military mutinies should be constantly in our memories. I turn to you officers in command of regiments in particular. You know the great responsibility which falls upon you in action. How often has the issue of the battle depended on the way a regiment has been led. It has often been enough for an energetic, gallant, capable man to get the command of a regiment to change its character utterly. The selection of men for these appointments must, therefore, be carefully made, and those chosen must work incessantly to educate all those under them.

“Up to the present our regimental commanders have, unfortunately, been too much taken up with routine and office work, and have been unable to give sufficient time to the practical military side of their duties, to that intercourse between officers and men which is so valuable. Some seem to think that their chief duty is to look after such details as the colour and the repainting of the transport carts, and not the training of the men. The constant strain of how to make both ends meet with the money granted, how to maintain the clothing and other

funds, has increased to such an extent, and worries some commanders so much, that they scarcely get to know their own officers, and do positive harm to their men by trying to increase funds at the expense of their rations, and therefore of their health. In the late war the Supply Department carried out their difficult duties so well that they have proved that they deserve to be implicitly trusted in peace-time ; we can therefore give over to this department much of the work of supplying the troops (clothing, equipment, transport, food). Then regimental and company commanders will stand out as real flesh and blood commanders in the true sense, and will cease to be "office" automatons and mere inspectors of stores and dépôts, and the work of training and education will progress.

"I would invite the special attention of all commanding officers to the necessity for thoroughly studying the characters of those under them. With us, men of independent character and initiative are rare. Search out such men, encourage them, promote them, and so encourage the growth of the qualities which are essential for all soldiers. Men of strong individuality are with us, unfortunately, often passed over, instead of receiving accelerated promotion. Because they are a source of anxiety to some officers in peace, they get repressed as being headstrong. The result is that they leave the service, while others, who possess neither force of character nor convictions, but who are subservient, and always ready to agree with their superiors, are promoted. Remember how much our inattention to the opinions and evidence of those under us has cost us.

"The greater part of the 1st Army is to remain

in the Far East, and I am convinced that the glorious Siberian regiments of the 1st Manchurian Army, which have been such a tower of strength in action, will now, under the new conditions of peace, still be Russia's bulwark in that quarter.

“In bidding you farewell, my dear comrades in the field, I sincerely hope that the war experience you have gained will be of great advantage to the army and the country. Devoted to Crown and country, always ready to maintain law and order, and to uphold the authority of the Government, holding yourselves aloof from the intrigues of political parties, and knowing your own weak and strong points as shown up by the struggle we have all been through, you will, I believe, quickly heal your wounds, and lead the army in its struggle towards perfection. Although in the future you may be denied the recollection of victories won, you can remember—and this should be a consolation and an encouragement—that you were ready, without fear of sacrifice, to continue the struggle with the gallant enemy till you had beaten him. You, officers, believed that you would win, and you succeeded in instilling this belief into our grand soldiers.

“May God assist you in the duties that lie before you, which are as important for our dear country as any we have already performed, even though they be in peace. Farewell. Accept my sincere gratitude for all your self-denying service in the field, and express to the men my thanks for their services, and for the many proofs they have given of devotion and loyalty to the Tsar and Fatherland.

“SHUAN-CHEN-PU,
“*February 18, 1906.*”

CHAPTER XI

Suggested measures for the improvement of the senior ranks; for the improvement of the regulars and reservists; for the reorganization of the reserve troops; for increasing the number of combatants in infantry regiments. Machine guns. Reserve Troops. Troops on the communications. Engineers. Artillery. Cavalry. Infantry. Organization generally.

Our recent experiences have furnished ample material by which we may be guided in our efforts to improve the war training and increase the efficiency of our forces. The War Ministry, assisted by officers who served in Manchuria, and by articles which have appeared in the military Press, has already embarked upon numerous reforms. I shall here merely express my own opinion upon the points I consider most important, and which should be settled first of all. Amongst these are measures for

1. The improvement of the senior ranks.
2. The improvement of the regular soldiers and reservists.
3. Reforms in the organization of the reserve troops.

4. Increasing the number of actual combatants in our infantry regiments.

5. Enlarging the war establishment of regiments, brigades, divisions, and corps, and, by means of decentralization, making them more independent.

As regards the first: Our three wars of the last fifty years have disclosed many shortcomings in our officers. Most of these have undoubtedly been due to the undeveloped state of the nation, and to the general conditions of life and labour, which have affected the army as an integral part of the whole population. Any serious attempt to improve our officers as a body, therefore, is only likely to be successful if and when a general improvement sets in in our social conditions. It has pleased the Tsar to inaugurate many fundamental reforms for the betterment of the civil status of all classes of our population in every walk of life, and reforms in the officer class should be instituted at the same time.

Why is it that, with so many capable, keen, and intelligent men as we possess among our junior officers and those in comparatively subordinate positions, we have so few original-minded, keen, and competent seniors? As I have said, the standard of all ranks of the army entirely depends on that of the nation. With the growth of the moral and mental faculties of the people at large there will be a corresponding

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4. Increasing the number of actual combatants in our infantry regiments.

5. Enlarging the war establishment of regiments, brigades, divisions, and corps, and, by means of decentralization, making them more independent.

As regards the first : Our three wars of the last fifty years have disclosed many shortcomings in our officers. Most of these have undoubtedly been due to the undeveloped state of the nation, and to the general conditions of life and labour, which have affected the army as an integral part of the whole population. Any serious attempt to improve our officers as a body, therefore, is only likely to be successful if and when a general improvement sets in in our social conditions. It has pleased the Tsar to inaugurate many fundamental reforms for the betterment of the civil status of all classes of our population in every walk of life, and reforms in the officer class should be instituted at the same time.

Why is it that, with so many capable, keen, and intelligent men as we possess among our junior officers and those in comparatively subordinate positions, we have so few original-minded, keen, and competent seniors ? As I have said, the standard of all ranks of the army entirely depends on that of the nation. With the growth of the moral and mental faculties of the people at large there will be a corresponding

growth in that of the military class ; but **so** long as the nation suffers from a paucity of well-informed, independent, and zealous men, the army cannot well be expected to be an exception. If the uniform attracted the pick of the population, out of a nation of many millions, however backward, there would be at least hundreds of the very best men—in every sense—quite capable of commanding troops in war. It would therefore seem necessary—

1. To adopt a military uniform such **as** will attract the flower of our youth.
2. To insist that the best of those privileged to wear the uniform should serve in the army, and there acquire the military knowledge and strength of character necessary for war.

In the first of these two particulars **we** have succeeded, for in Russia the military uniform has been particularly honoured for years ; **but** we have by no means approached near the second desideratum. The majority of the best men wearing military uniform have not only never served in the army, but are absolutely **unconnected** with it. In the eighteenth century a custom crept in of dressing the sons of grandees in military clothes, and they could **get** promotion at an age when they were riding toy horses round drawing-rooms. Then, little by little, military uniform, military rank, **even** that of General, ceased to become the **absolute** pre-



GENERAL GRIPPENBERG.

Opposite p. 100, vol. ii.

rogative of the army, or, indeed, to denote any connection with war. The members of the Church were the only people not arrayed in it. Members of the Imperial Council, Ambassadors, Senators, Ministers of the different departments and their assistants, Governor-Generals, Governors, Mayors, Superintendents of Police, officials in the various Government departments and in the military institutions, all wore military uniform, and were graded in different ranks. With few exceptions, all that they had to do with the army was to be a source of weakness to it. Amongst the many names in the long list of generals, only a few belong to officers on the active list, and, what is worse, those who are serving in the army get superseded in rank by, and receive less emoluments than, those who are not. Consequently, the best elements in the service are naturally anxious to leave. The posts of Minister of the Interior, of Finance, of Ways and Communications, of Education, and of State Control, used to be held by generals and admirals, as well as the appointments of Ambassador at Constantinople, Paris, London, and Berlin. Service uniforms were therefore conspicuous at all diplomatic and ministerial gatherings. Military clothes also had a great attraction for other departments, and several of them tried to assimilate their uniforms as much as possible to those of army officers. The worst offender in this respect was

the Ministry of the Interior, which adopted a uniform for police-officers and even for constables which could hardly be distinguished from that worn by military officers. The private soldiers were naturally unable to make anything of this multitude of uniforms, and never knew whom to salute or obey; indeed, the police-officers' great-coats and caps with cockades were enough to puzzle the most discriminating. This all seems incomprehensible; but the ambition to wear military uniform is easily explained. It is largely due to the ignorance of the people. Not long ago, anyone wearing even a hat with a cockade was taken in the country for a person in authority; caps were doffed to him, and in winter heavily laden sledges would be turned into snow-drifts to give him the road, while his vulgar abuse would be patiently accepted.

Thirty years ago, when a young officer, I spent about a year on service with the French in Algiers, and travelled a great deal. I was astonished to find that it was found convenient, even under republican rule, to keep to a system of semi-military government for the native population—Arabs and Kabyles. It was, in this case, entrusted mainly to army officers, and those civilians who were also appointed had to adopt a uniform similar to that worn by the military. These officials told me in all seriousness that their

spurs and the gold braid round their caps assisted them in their dealings with the Arabs, in collecting taxes, settling land questions, and other matters. It was so in our case. Undoubtedly the wearing of military clothes did facilitate the difficult work which our police-officers have to do ; but a great change has recently come over the country, and a uniform alone is not now enough to command obedience. It is sometimes a drawback, if not a danger. It is, of course, to be hoped that such an unnatural state of affairs will not last ; but it is very desirable to take advantage of the present indifference displayed by the civil population to uniform to take it from all who are not actually serving in the army. The time has come when the prestige appertaining to our uniform should be restored, and the status of those serving in the army should be raised.

With the same object in view, we must continue to try and improve the material position and prospects of the corps of officers. An important matter, and one to which I have given much attention - so far without entire success—is that service on the staff, in offices and in branches of the War Department, should not pay better than service with the troops. Many of the officers now so employed in semi-civil duties can well be replaced by civilian officials. It is, moreover, essential that service in the Frontier Guards, in the Customs, police, gendarmerie, on the railway,

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and as tax-collectors, should cease to be financially preferable to service in the army.

As senior officers get on in the service, they must not be allowed to forget what they have previously learnt, a thing which is now only too common. It is essential that they should be practised in peace in commanding troops, and not be mere administrators, inspectors, spectators, and umpires. They should therefore be in a position to spend most of their time with troops in the field and in cantonments. With our military system the command of troops is at present almost entirely in the hands of the regimental, brigade, divisional, corps and district commanders.* Thus our infantry and cavalry regiments used to be under five masters. But, in the words of the proverb, too many cooks spoil the broth, and in war all was not for the best in all our regiments. Often while the ingredients and the fire left nothing to be desired, the cooks did not know what to do. How can such a state of things be explained? It will be said that the selection of commanders was not always happy. That is true; but it must be remembered that selections had to be made from those men who were qualified according to the regulations and the reports drawn up by various

* When the appointments of Inspector-Generals were created, some confusion resulted between the powers of these and that of the district commanders.

commanding officers. In some cases seniority was considered to be by itself a qualification for promotion. Efforts of a sort were undoubtedly made to get the best men we had, but they were insufficient. All the commanders in the five degrees of our military hierarchy are so occupied with their daily work of routine and correspondence, while many are so overburdened with the administrative details of their appointments, that they have little time to attend to the business of actual war. Yet, as they get on in the service, more knowledge of war is required of them. The short periods of concentration in summer, with only a few days of instructional work on both sides, give little practice in command, and at other times the number of responsible duties connected with administration places that art on a far higher plane than mere soldiering. And what is most important is that the whole of our service—of our lives almost—is spent doing things which do not go to form character. Of the five posts above mentioned, only two—the divisional and corps commanders—are in any way independent, and their occupants are immersed in office work. The relative amount of time spent on the different sorts of duties tends to turn the regimental commander into an administrator rather than a fighter, while a brigade commander has absolutely no independence; in fact, his absence or presence is scarcely noticed. Finally,

the same tendency to produce office men and bureaucrats is noticeable even in the work of those on the highest rungs of the ladder—the general officers in command of military districts. Instances might be multiplied of men who, though long in charge of military districts, never once commanded troops on manœuvres, and for several years never even got astride a horse. How can this impossible state of affairs be remedied, and a body of leaders, constantly practised in the execution of those duties in command of troops that would be required of them in war, be formed ?

I.

On active service the rôle of the regimental commander is both wide and important. To issue successfully from the test of modern war, he must have character, experience, and facility in manœuvring his unit in the field, must know his men well, and therefore have found the time both for intercourse with his officers and for perfecting himself in his profession. In battle it is men he has to deal with, and not files of papers and storehouses. But, situated as he is at present, he is so overburdened with important administrative details that most of his time is passed dealing with requisitions and inventories instead of with flesh and blood. The penalties he incurs by neglect of his administrative duties are far heavier and more tangible than those incurred

by neglecting the tactical training of his regiment. The greater part of these duties—those such as are connected with clothing, transport, and rationing—should be removed from his shoulders. He should be made the controller of these sections of duty, and not the person actually responsible. Nor is his position easy in respect to the *personnel*. The great shortage of officers, especially in those units quartered in inferior barracks, is the cause of many difficulties. When mobilization is ordered, some of the already too small number of officers are told off for the innumerable miscellaneous duties and detachments; commanders of battalions and of companies are interchanged; many of the men are transferred to other units, a mass of reservists join, and, if there is not time for the new arrivals to settle down with the few old hands, the commander has to lead into action a regiment which he does not know, and which does not know itself. Our mobilization schemes, therefore, require revision in this respect, and every regiment should have in peace-time a permanent establishment of officers and men who would accompany the regiment on service. The company commanders in particular should not be removed from their companies. But to make such an arrangement possible, it is essential that one of the senior captains (who might be appointed to the staff) should run the regimental school. It

is also important to keep the regimental commander as a man apart as far as possible; he should be made to realize upon all occasions the peculiar importance of the duties entrusted to him, and the respect due to himself personally by reason of these duties.

II.

In Manchuria, just as in the wars of the second half of last century, the great value of the infantry brigade as an independent fighting unit came out strongly in all the large battles; as also did the great influence of its commander on the result of the fight.

The advance and rear guards of army corps generally consisted of brigades. A brigade commander usually began the attack; a brigade commander usually finished it (by commanding the rearguard). And yet the post of Brigadier is not considered one of importance; his powers are insignificant, and his position does not allow him sufficient independence to enable him to train either himself or his unit. Divisional commanders and their chief staff-officers in peace-time often ignore the brigadiers as if they were not wanted, and were fifth wheels to the coach; and their absence for whole years, building barracks and roads, etc., is not considered to have any adverse effect on the successful training of the regiments under them. In such cir-

cumstances even the zealous ones, and those anxious to do their duty, become dulled, slack, and lose capacity for work. There can be only one way out of this unnatural state of things, which, from a military point of view, is most harmful: *brigade commanders must in peacetime be given independent command of those units which they will have to command independently in war.* This applies to cavalry as well as to infantry. Every brigade should have a small staff such as exists in independent brigades—namely, two adjutants, one an officer of the General Staff for operations, and one for administration. Each brigade commander should have powers in both these branches of their duty equal to that now delegated to divisional commanders, while their disciplinary powers should remain as at present.

III.

Our divisional commanders are independent and in direct touch with troops; but they also are overburdened with routine correspondence, and as they are frequently appointed to command the summer camps, it happens that they are more often present at the exercises of the troops as spectators than actually in command. In field operations where there are two sides, the divisional general rarely finds it possible to take command of one, partly owing to an ex-

aggerated idea of his own abilities, and partly to the scarcity of officers of sufficient seniority to be umpires. Consequently, he only gets practice in commanding troops in the field during concentrations of large bodies of men. This is not enough. Commanders of infantry divisions, in particular, do not know nearly enough about the other arms, owing to the little practice they get in commanding mixed forces. So, while giving greater powers to brigade commanders, it will be also advisable to delegate to divisional generals the powers now exercised by corps commanders (with the exception of disciplinary powers). Divisional commanders should always remember that the 16,000 rifles which they command are a number that can decide the fate of any action. With the inclusion, in divisions, of artillery, sapper, and cavalry units, exceedingly instructive exercises can be arranged within these units both in summer and winter, and the troops and their commanders thereby trained for war under modern war conditions. The four* officers of the General Staff who would be with each division should be relieved of all routine, except that relating to operations, and they should devote the whole of their time and energies to preparing work for the brigade and divisional commanders in the training of the troops for battle.

* Two in the two brigades, and two on the divisional staff.

IV.

Army corps commanders are quite independent, but, like the divisional commanders, are overburdened with routine correspondence, etc., and do not get sufficient practice in commanding troops in the field. Some, during a tour of duty of several years, have never commanded troops on manœuvres; and it is impossible for all of them to have sufficient acquaintance with cavalry, as some corps do not include this arm. They and their staff, especially the General Staff officers, have no practice at all, or else very little, in the use of technical equipment and the modern aids to warfare (telegraphs, telephones, mines, motors, balloons, etc.). The experience of the late war showed up the necessity of increasing the establishment of the army corps, and the actions of their commanders will have such an important, and in many cases deciding, influence, that extremely careful selection is necessary for these posts; the men appointed must be capable of teaching others as well as of learning themselves. As with the divisional generals, so should the powers of corps commanders be extended at the expense of those now exercised by officers in command of military districts.

V.

The commanders of military districts are the senior officers actually in charge of troops, and

have at the same time important duties as administrative heads of districts. Here again administrative work, together with correspondence connected with the troops, occupies the greater part of their time, and only in exceptionally favourable circumstances (the large manoeuvres with concentrations of troops from different districts) can they get any practice in commanding in the field. But as they also have to perform the duties of Governor-General, they are not able to devote sufficient time to the troops, even in inspecting them, or to improving themselves. I am absolutely convinced that, however much such a combination of two appointments—each of which requires a man of exceptional ability and character—may be desirable from the political point of view, it has the gravest disadvantages for the army. There is a limit to human power. As our governor-generals devote the greater part of their time and energies to civil matters, they entrust a large part of their military duties to the chief staff-officers of the districts. It can easily be understood that such an arrangement is not in the interests of the army. For instance, the most important military district—that of Warsaw—was, as far as the army was concerned, neglected in the time of several governor-generals. Indeed, at one time, much to the subversion of the authority of officers in command of districts and corps, the

troops in this area were controlled by the chief of the district staff! Therefore, if we wish that the commanders of military districts—our most natural selections for the command of armies in war—should have time to prepare themselves for this important duty, *we should free them from civil duties*; otherwise we shall get no improvement. They must also be relieved of the numerous and responsible cares with respect to all those questions which in war mainly fall to the officer in command of the communications.

The inspection of hospitals, of supply depôts, engineer and artillery units, of parks, of offices—everything that takes too much time from the exercises for the actual training of the troops and of themselves—should be eliminated from their duties. These have become so heavy with the complications of modern war, and are fraught with such importance to army and country, that the men who will have to perform them must unceasingly prepare themselves in peace; but, for the reasons I have already given, few officers have time to follow up the developments in their profession. That is why in the recent war we were left behind in knowledge of the employment of artillery, of the utility of the various technical means of intercommunication, in appreciating relative value of different attack formations, etc. *Our senior officers must be given*

sufficient leisure, while improving the troops under them, at the same time to improve themselves.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE REGULARS.

I have more than once pointed out how excellent the regulars were as regards military qualifications, and how much more reliable in the first fights than the reservists, especially the older ones. But we must look to the nation itself for the cause of the shortcomings of both. The lack of education in the peasant is reflected in the private soldier, and the non-existence of a martial spirit amongst the masses, coupled to the dislike for the war, resulted in the absence of a military spirit in our troops in Manchuria. Their ignorance made the conduct of modern war, which demands a much greater spirit of combination and initiative from the individual than formerly, very difficult for us. Consequently, while behaving with the utmost gallantry when in close order—in mass—our men, when left to themselves without officers, were more inclined to retire than to advance. In the mass they were formidable; but very few of them were fit for individual action, and this is a point in which the Japanese had a great advantage. Their non-commissioned officers in particular were better educated than ours, and on many prisoners—private soldiers as well as non-commissioned officers—we found diaries

written not only grammatically, but with a general knowledge of what was going on and of what the Japanese were trying to do. Many of them drew well. One prisoner—a private—drew on the sand an excellent diagram of our position and that of the enemy.

It is never easy to turn in a short time an ignorant, illiterate recruit into an intelligent and keen soldier, capable of individual action ; and the recent reduction* of the term of service has made the task still harder. The greatest difficulty, however, is to get good non-commissioned officers ; even with the four to five year period with the colours we were not able to do this satisfactorily. The mass of our recruits are so illiterate, and so much book knowledge is required in the schools from our non-commissioned officers, that there is a natural tendency to pick the men for these posts on account of their education and outward sharpness. This is a mistake, as these qualities are often superficial. The simple recruits of the deepest and strongest characters are usually slow and uncouth and do not shine externally ; consequently many of them never become selected for non-commissioned rank, and finish their service as private soldiers. But a surly man of some character often makes a better soldier than his smarter

* [Service with the colours in Russia has been reduced generally from five to three years.—ED.]

comrade. With the reduced term of service we can do nothing without a considerable number of time-expired men. The present conditions under which these men are kept on in the ranks are sound enough, but the men dislike doing time-expired, or what they characterize as "mercenary," service. We must get over this dislike, and therefore as much as possible raise the position of sergeant-major and other non-commissioned officers.

Another burning question, and one with which we shall be confronted more and more in the future, is how to keep the destructive tenets of the revolutionary parties out of our barracks. Drastic action will of course be taken, but if we do not succeed in crushing these parties among the people, we can hardly expect to be able to keep the army from infection.

One of the most important requirements with our short term of service is that our men should not be taken away from their work for police duties. The part so frequently taken by the troops in putting down civil disorders by force of arms is particularly harmful to discipline. To turn to another point, owing to the inadequate funds allotted, our soldiers have always been treated worse than those of other armies. The Germans, for instance, spend twice as much per head upon the maintenance of their army as we do. Some improvement in this direction has

already been made, especially in the feeding. With a serviceable cadre of time-expired sergeant-majors and non-commissioned officers, and with the living conditions of the men improved, we can face the future calmly even with a three-year term of service. But we shall only succeed if we relieve the troops of the large amount of extra regimental work which falls to them (tailoring, shoemaking, and other workshop work, care of reserve stores, etc.), and if we lighten their guard duties. Our recruits are free from this work and from guards only in the first year of service.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE RESERVISTS.

Our infantry in the recent war can be classified in four groups, according to the relative number of old regular soldiers and reservists :

1. The East Siberian Rifle Regiments, which were maintained almost on a war footing* in peace.
2. The infantry in the 1st Brigades of the 31st and 35th Divisions, which were filled up to war strength with regulars at the beginning of the war.
3. The infantry of the regular army corps brought up to war strength with reservists.
4. The infantry units formed from reserve troops.

* The transport was not fully horsed.

According to the opinion of competent officers who served in the war (which I fully share), other conditions being equal, *the more regular soldiers there were in a unit, the more it could be relied on in battle.* The best troops we had were the East Siberian Rifle Regiments, and after them the brigades of the 31st and 85th Divisions. In the case of the army corps, which proceeded to the front direct from Russia, sufficient care was not taken to regulate the proportion of regulars to reservists. Some units—the 10th Army Corps, for instance—arrived at the front 20 per cent. below strength in men, and more in officers. In the first fight in which it was engaged, several companies of this corps had only sixty regular soldiers—thirty trained men and thirty recruits—who had not *even passed their recruit's musketry course.* All the remainder were reservists, among whom were a large number of 2nd Category men. These regular units consequently were, to all intents and purposes, nothing but reserve units. Finally, our reserve units arrived almost without any permanent peace cadres, so swallowed up were they in the great mass of reservists. In the early fighting these reservists, particularly those of the 2nd Category, were vastly inferior to the regulars; many of them took advantage of every opportunity to leave the ranks with or without permission. There is little doubt that if the

war had been a national one, and if the country had supported its sons at the front instead of doing the opposite, these men would have done better in the first fights ; but it is also quite certain that, other conditions being equal, the man with the colours must be better than the other as a soldier. He is not torn from his family at a time when he has begun to think that his military liability is over ; he is better trained, and possesses *esprit de corps*. Therefore, the best way of improving our infantry is to maintain it with a stronger peace establishment than at present.

In Manchuria a peace establishment of 100 men per company became so weak from the various causes incidental to active service that companies went into action with one-third regulars to two-thirds reservists. Nominally regular forces, they were in reality more like reserve troops. Regulars should be in the majority in every company, but the great difficulties and expense of maintaining troops on a strong peace footing compel us to pay special attention to the question of improving our reserve men. Modern war must be fought mainly with men temporarily called up from amongst the people.

The only thing that will insure devotion to their country among reservists proceeding to the front is the existence of a spirit of patriotism in the nation. Discontent and feelings of oppres-

sion among the people are naturally reflected in the minds of those of them leaving for war. But, independent of such all-important general considerations, there are certain definite things that can be taken to improve the tone of the reservists. According to the present system, when a man passes from the colours into the reserve his connection with his own unit—in fact, with the Service generally—almost ceases. The practice concentrations are not carried out on a large enough scale, and though valuable, are often dispensed with altogether on account of financial considerations. So it happens that a man passing into the reserve takes his uniform with him, but, with rare exceptions, never even wears his forage-cap ; this he generally gives to some neighbour or relation—hardly ever a soldier—to wear out. The reservist himself only too gladly dons peasant's clothes or other mufti ; he is glad to feel that he is a peasant again. He starts in business, takes up peaceful occupations, and raises a family. When he reaches the age of forty, he begins to put on flesh. And it is under these conditions that he is suddenly torn from the bosom of his family, and sent to fight in a strange, “hired”* land for a cause for which he feels no sympathy, and which he does not understand. To this are added the general dis-

* [By this expression is meant a land not belonging to Russia.—ED.]

content all around him, and a flood of revolutionary proclamations. The separation of the reservist from all touch with the army once he has left it does not tend to his rapid retransformation from "mujik" into trained soldier. In the case of Manchuria he certainly became a good man after some months in the school of war, but so long a period of grace cannot be counted on in the future.

Coming here into the heart of the country as I did nine months ago, and staying here continuously, I have been in a position to observe our reservists returning from the war. When the return stream first began in March, April, and May, there were large numbers. Sometimes when I passed they would fall in—in line—and receive me after the military fashion. They wore fur caps, very often military great-coats, and looked, as they were, a fine body of young soldiers. Nine months of hard work in the fields soon turned them again into peasants, and now, when they come to me, on business or otherwise, instead of saluting, they take off their caps and call me "Barin."*

In Japan mothers counted it a dishonour if their sons were rejected as medically unfit to go to the front. With us how different it was! Women often came to thank me heartily for

* [The term used by common folk in Russia when addressing men of higher birth.—ED.]

having "had pity" on their sons and husbands, because these latter happened to have been told off for duty with transport units or with hospitals, etc., instead of being sent into action,* and they did the same when their men returned safe and sound. In Japan, Germany, and other countries, some endeavour is made in education to inculcate patriotism into the people. A love of country and pride in the Fatherland is created in the children. As has been said before, the schools in Japan do everything they can to create and foster a martial spirit in the youth of the nation, and to practise them in military matters. There and in other countries the formation of various patriotic societies is approved, and all kinds of physical sport are encouraged. The authorities are not afraid to issue thousands of rifles to the people for rifle practice, etc. We do not do this; we are afraid for political reasons. Little is done to inculcate patriotism by education in our schools, and the great gulf between Church, rural, and Government schools makes matters worse. Students in the highest educational establishments have long ago abandoned study for politics; it has for long been the fashion to

* Owing to famine in the Kholm district in the years just before the war, the reservists in it were called up later than those in the neighbouring districts, and the majority of them were consequently stationed on the line of communications.

abuse everything Russian, and military service is thought to be dishonourable. Our infantry soldier is undersized and overloaded; he is usually untidy, often dirty, and wears an ugly and ill-fitting uniform. Is it a wonder that, as he slouches along, he excites more pity than pride in the man in the street? And yet it is on this undersized man that the integrity of the Empire depends. Money is tight, as we all know, but still, we do not keep the soldier clean and smart enough when he is serving, and when we pass him into the reserve we give him a dress which he can display with no pride to his neighbours or even his own family. Under such conditions, how can we hope that he will then suddenly turn into a martial warrior?

Only by the reformation of our schools, and the introduction into the life of the lower classes of reforms, which, besides increasing their comfort, will develop in them a love for, and pride in, their country, and a deep sense of the necessity for some sacrifice for it, shall we get in the reserve a thorough soldier of the right sort. The attainment of such a result cannot depend entirely on any actions of the War Department, which must, after all, be secondary; but the things that can be effected by it are nevertheless important, and I will enumerate those which seem to be the most pressing.

In an army discipline is the foundation of all

efficiency ; but to maintain discipline in an army is impossible when the mass of the nation have no respect for authority, and where the authorities actually fear those under them. The term of service with the colours is now so short that there is no time to overcome in the soldier the disorderliness of the people from whom he comes, yet to effect improvement in the reservist demands an iron military discipline. It must not be allowed for a moment that a soldier need not be afraid of his officer. The present greatest enemy to discipline is the employment of soldiers in the political struggle now going on. On the one hand, the force is corrupted by propaganda ; on the other, men are taken away from military duties and detailed for almost continual police work, in putting down disorder not only of a military nature, such as mutiny, where the situation can only be saved by the assistance of reliable troops, but riots which should be dealt with by the police and the gendarmes. Officers are taken away to sit on field courts,* to judge, shoot, and hang political and other criminals. These duties make the populace hate the troops, and among the soldiers who suffer in killed and wounded it arouses a feeling of hatred not only for the civilians who shoot at them, but against the officers who order them to kill the civilians. The result is demoralizing to a degree. What

* [Summary courts-martial under martial law.—ED.]

impression can the man passing into the reserve take home with him if, during the two or three years of his colour service, he has been "maintaining order" in various ways with the aid of his rifle? The army can and must do all that is necessary to suppress mutinies, and to break down all organized opposition, but it should then return at once to its ordinary work. If this sort of duty becomes frequent, if the soldier sees that the Government is powerless to restore order even with the aid of troops, doubts will creep into his mind as to the expediency of the Government's policy and as to his own commanders. According to what I hear, it seems that the heavy task which has recently fallen to the lot of the army is now coming to an end, and that order is beginning once more to be restored in our great country. Please God may it soon be the case, as otherwise the force must deteriorate instead of improving.

Under ordinary conditions our work should tend to make the man passed into the reserve arrive in his native village or town well disciplined, knowing his work, taking a pride in his old corps, and respecting those under whom he has served. We must therefore endeavour to prevent him from losing touch with the Service and quickly forgetting what he has learned in it. In some armies to obviate this they have what is called the territorial system, by which reservists

maintain touch to the end of their term with those units in which they have served. This system is not possible for us in its entirety, but it might be applied partially and adopted on a fairly large scale. One of its great advantages would be that reservists would on mobilization at once join the units in which they had previously served. They would not be strangers, but would be known to the cadre of time-expired, but still serving, non-commissioned officers and the officers, and would soon settle down. Men of the same district would be more inclined to hold together under fire, and every man would feel that if he behaved badly his comrade would send news of it to his home. Units territorially connected with the people would be more dashing than corps collected from anywhere. There would, of course, be many difficulties, which would have to be overcome before the system could be adopted. For instance, men taken from a certain locality would, if employed to suppress disorders in that place, be more likely to waver than men from another unit and district. Cases have been known where non-commissioned officers who had been strict with their men have requested, on being passed into the reserve, not to be sent off in the same compartment of a train with their late subordinates, who had threatened to "make things even" so soon as they both passed into

organization. In my opinion, neither corps nor divisions are necessary. It would be more advantageous to form the reserve units into independent brigades of eight battalions, and to use them as army troops, or possibly as corps troops. The mobilization of the reserve artillery, sapper, and cavalry, should take place together with that of the infantry. Every reserve brigade of eight battalions (8,000 rifles) should have, with two batteries of twelve guns, one company of sappers and one reserve squadron of cavalry or a *sotnia* of Cossacks. This arrangement would permit of reserve troops being employed on secondary objects without the organization of the army being broken up, and it would no longer be necessary to find so many divisional and corps commanders, with their numerous staffs.

STEPS TO AUGMENT THE COMBATANT ELEMENT IN OUR INFANTRY.

Amongst the causes of our disasters has been mentioned (Chapter VI.) the small number of rifles per company we had in action as compared with the Japanese. We often had more battalions than they, but fewer men. The various reasons for this I have already enumerated. To lessen the number of subsidiary duties which take men away from the fighting-line of the regular army, we must create cadres for the

troops of the rear services ; we must also arrange that the casualties are quickly made good from the reserve troops, which should be kept up permanently and closely connected with the regular troops. (Every regular regiment should have one reserve or dépôt battalion.) To augment the numbers fighting compared with the numbers fed, and, in particular, to increase the number of men in the firing-line, we must bring up the combatant establishment of our companies from 220 to 250 rifles. With 220 rifles on the roll of a company, we were never able to put even 200 in action ; and in bringing the strength of these units up to 250, we must take steps to see that they all really can take the field. According to the "War Establishments," a line infantry regiment has an establishment of 3,838 combatants and 159* non-combatants (total 3,997), which gives 235 rifles per company. But in this number are included 35 bandsmen, 33 drummers, 1 bugler, 3 regimental quartermaster-sergeants, 1 sergeant-major of the non-combatant company, 5 baggage non-commissioned officers, and, moreover, another 240 (15 per company) detailed for supply work, etc. Excluding these, 3,520 combatants are left, which gives 220 per company ; but experience has shown that there is much leakage from this number.

* With two-wheeled baggage-carts, the number has to be increased by an additional fifty-four men.

The peculiarities of Manchuria necessitated the employment of men on duties that would have been quite unnecessary, or less necessary, in a European war. Thus, in addition to the authorized transport, we had pack transport, which swallowed up fifty men per regiment. The large herds of cattle with regiments required twenty-four men to look after and guard them. There were nine regimental butchers. Two or three donkeys were told off to each company. (Indeed, they were of such great use in taking water and ammunition up into the firing-line that I consider they should be included in the establishments of troops in European Russia.) In each company one man was told off to these animals. The number of officers on the regimental rolls included those who had been wounded and were away convalescent, and many of these took their orderlies with them on leaving the front. The expenditure in these orderlies alone amounted to more than 100 men. For the special pack transport, which was formed for the scout sections for carriage of ammunition and supplies, thirteen men per regiment were required. Judging by the experience of the war, I consider the following duties ought to be allowed for in every regiment in addition to the establishment of 159 non-combatants :

Company clerks	...	...	...	...	16
Mess caterers	...	...	...	...	18
Officers' mess cooks	...	...	...	...	4
Men's cooks	...	...	...	...	18
Butchers and cattle guard	...	...	...	...	12
Officers' grooms	...	...	...	...	27
Transport drivers with scout sections	...	...	...	...	13
Instructors	...	...	...	...	4
Stretcher-bearers	...	...	...	...	128
Baggage guard	...	...	...	...	48†
With water donkeys	...	...	...	...	16
Officers' orderlies	...	...	...	...	80
Sergeant-major of non-combatant company					1
Transport driver non-commissioned officers					5
Despatch riders	...	...	...	...	20
Bandsmen	...	...	...	...	35
Drummers	...	...	...	...	33
Reserve in case of sickness and wounded	...	...	...	...	13
<hr/>					
Total	...	...	...	...	491

All these must be classed as non-combatants. Adding to these the prescribed establishment of 159 non-combatants, we shall get a total of 650 with each regiment of four battalions. They should all be armed, and be ready to fight either in the advanced lines or with the baggage.

The value of machine-guns is now so great that we cannot afford to be without them. In my opinion, each company should have one gun, and six men should be detailed to carry it and

* Cooks and mess caterers, eighteen of each—*i.e.*, sixteen per company, and two with scout sections, one mounted, one dismounted.

† Three per company.

Fixing the total number of non-combatants required at 650, I thus add to the expenditure authorized by existing establishments 173. These, including stretcher-bearers, would never go into action. Thus, the addition necessary to bring the fighting element of a regiment up to 5,000 comes out as follows :

Increase of thirty rifles per company (so as to have 250 instead of 220)	...	480
Scout sections	...	200
Machine-gun sections	...	150
Total	...	830

This increase would greatly add to its present strength.

MACHINE-GUNS.

At the beginning of the war the army had only a small number of machine-guns. Recognizing the value of this weapon, the Japanese quickly introduced it, and furnished their field troops with a large number. We did the same, and several machine-gun companies and sections arrived from Russia during the summer of 1905. But the type of weapon did not satisfy tactical requirements—(1) as regards its weight ; and, (2) adaptability to the ground. A pattern must be invented that can be carried even into the outpost line. Our high, unwieldy weapons, with their shields, more resembled light field-guns ; and their unsuitable construction, combined with the difficulty of adapting them

to the ground, was responsible for the decision that these guns should be organized into batteries, and be treated and used as artillery. Such an opinion is absolutely wrong, for the great volume of fire which they can deliver calls for their distribution at the most important points along the firing-line, and, therefore, a capability of advancing with assaulting columns. The organization of machine-gun companies did not meet the above tactical requirements. Each battalion should have four guns.

RESERVE (OR DEPÔT) TROOPS.

The reserve or dépôt troops should be developed and given an organization which will permit of the wastage in units, both in officers and men, being made good from them immediately after a battle or during a long series of battles. Each infantry regiment should have its reserve (dépôt) battalion, which should be formed on mobilization at a strength of 40 per cent. of the combatant establishment of a regiment—*i.e.*, at 1,600 men.* Of these, 400, or 10 per cent. of the regiment's strength, should be in the theatre of war. This number should be formed into one company, and should constitute the reserve dépôt company of its par-

* [This is taking a regiment at 4,000—*i.e.*, the men actually in the firing-line and not employed specially—for scout sections, etc.—Ed.]

ticular regiment, and be continually feeding it. With every division these companies should be organized together into a reserve battalion of 1,600 men for the immediate replacement of casualties in the regiments of the division. All wounded and sick who are not sent to the base should be attached to this battalion till they are passed as fit. After great battles this reserve would be depleted, and would require filling up from the base dépôt. The establishment of the other arms should be kept up to strength by a parallel arrangement. The casualties amongst non-combatants are less, but in their case a reserve is necessary, distinct from the combatant reserve, to make good their wastage. It should be mainly composed of 2nd Category reservists and those of the convalescent combatants not considered fit enough for the ranks.

The war shows very clearly the immense importance of rapidly repairing the wastage in units directly after an action. The Japanese succeeded in doing this, with the result that they were greatly superior to us in numbers. It was more important for us to be able to replace casualties by drafts than to receive reinforcements, and it would have made us stronger. For instance, with five troop trains available in the twenty-four hours, a complete army corps with its baggage and parks took twenty days to reach the front, and increased our strength by some 25,000 rifles.

If drafts had been sent up during those twenty days instead of an army corps, we should have received 90,000 to 100,000 men. In place of cavalry, baggage, artillery, parks, and a small number of infantry, we should have got a large number of the latter. It was infantry we wanted, for in our big battles it was the infantry that suffered so heavily. The number of guns per 1,000 rifles was too large, and the amount of transport and baggage was prodigious, with the result that the 10,000 to 12,000 rifles left in corps resembled an escort to the artillery, parks, baggage, etc.,* more than anything else.

TROOPS IN REAR—COMMUNICATION TROOPS.

By troops in rear I mean those at rest camps, railway troops, road working parties, telegraph sections, motor troops, transport of various kinds, all of which should be under the general officer commanding communications. There is also a large number of men in the departments, institutions, and dépôts of all the field administrations, but as in Manchuria these were mostly fixed by the authorized establishment, I will not refer to them. The absence of any prepared organization of troops for the line of communication, however, led to their being formed at the expense of the

* I several times reported to the War Minister that the despatch of drafts to fill up wastage in the units already at the front was much more necessary than the despatch to us of fresh units.

fighting strength of the infantry. While officers commanding regiments complained of the great wastage of their men on duties in the rear, those in rear complained that the numbers they had were insufficient. Troops for the duties in rear should of course be formed on mobilization. In the part of my report upon the 1st Army which deals with the organization of the communications there is much valuable material which is based on war experience, and may be a useful guide for the future. By the end of August, 1905, the strength of the 1st Army alone was 300,000. Its own communications in rear had a depth of 150 miles and a frontage of 330 miles, including the detachments guarding the extreme left flank and the left flank corps under General Rennenkampf, with which we permanently occupied a front of about 70 miles. Under the general commanding the communications of the 1st Army, which consisted of six army corps, were 650 officers and officials, 12,000 men, and 25,000 horses, and this number was considered inadequate. In my report, I gave as my estimate for the numbers required for one army corps per day's march in length of communications—

				Men.
1. Half company infantry...	...	...	...	120
2. Transport	...	...	...	320
3. Road troops	...	...	...	25
4. Postal telegraph working parties			...	5
Total	...	...	...	<u>470</u>

ENGINEER TROOPS.

The great development of science in warfare is very marked, but the late war did not display the employment of scientific forces that will be made in a struggle between two European Powers. In this respect the Japanese were much better served than we were, but even they were not technically equipped in the way that will soon be necessary. The speedy construction of strong fortifications, the laying of railways (especially of field railways) and construction of metalled roads, the organization of aerial and wireless telegraphy, of signalling by heliograph, lamps, and flags, the employment of balloons, motors, and bicycles, are all duties for which the demand increases every day, while the great quantity also of artificial obstacles, wire, mines, hand-grenades, explosives, reserves of entrenching tools, etc., now required must exist ready for use in large quantities. A much larger number of engineer troops, including sappers, telegraph and railway units, than we had available in Manchuria is necessary, in order that all this technical equipment may be used to the best advantage. Without touching here upon the railway troops necessary for the proper service of the communications, the number of which must depend upon the length of the existing lines, and of those proposed to be laid during

operations, let us consider the question of the number of sapper and telegraph troops required for one army corps of three divisions.

The spade, which had been forgotten since the Turkish War, has once more regained its true position. With the volume and murderous effectiveness of modern fire, neither the attack nor the defence can be conducted without enormous losses, unless proper and intelligent use is made of digging. For a protracted defence strong fortified positions with both open and closed works and all possible kinds of artificial obstacles are absolutely necessary. Consequently, for the attack of such positions, special troops are required trained in the use of explosives and the destruction of obstacles, and in road-making, for heavy artillery demands good roads and strong bridges.

While every Japanese division of twelve infantry battalions had one strong sapper battalion, we had on an average only one company of sappers with each division. This proved to be too small a proportion. Our sappers worked nobly in the construction of earthworks and roads, but they did little in actual contact with the enemy, and, strange as it may appear, were often forgotten when an action began, even when we attacked the enemy's strongly fortified positions. In the 2nd Army we had several sapper battalions, and yet in the assault on San-de-pu*

[* Battle of Hei-kou-tai.—Ed.]

not a single company was told off to accompany the storming columns. As our sappers were so scarce, we took the greatest care of them, as their small number of casualties as compared with those of the infantry proves. To get the best results from this arm, it seems to me necessary to associate them more with other troops, and therefore to *attach them to divisions*, instead of including them in the corps troops. If we succeed in getting strong regiments of 4,000 rifles, I consider it essential that every regiment should have attached to it, for offensive as well as defensive operations, one sapper company of 250 men, which would mean a four-company sapper battalion, 1,000 strong, for every division. They should be trained to put up obstacles very rapidly, and should possess the necessary tools and equipment for their destruction. A large supply of wire is also very important ; it may be taken that every division should have a sufficient supply of wire for two defensive points, say 1 ton for each.

Moreover, there should be attached to each division a field-telegraph company of six sections, in order to organize rapid communication between each party of troops thrown out in front and the divisional staff. Each regiment should have with it a section which should be equipped to establish communication by telephone,* flag,

* Colonel Ujin's pack-telephone system, which I tried in Manchuria, is a very good one.

cycle or motor. With every three-division army corps there should be a sapper brigade of three battalions, a field-telegraph battalion of five companies, a mining company, a balloon section, and a railway battalion. Two of the telegraph companies should keep up communication from the corps to army headquarters, to other corps, to its own divisions, to the parks, the baggage, and reserves.

One of our principal failings, as I have repeatedly mentioned, was lack of information. Owing to this, and the consequent loss of touch, commanders could not conduct operations intelligently or keep corps and army commanders and the Commander-in-Chief informed of what was happening. Every Japanese regiment laid down telephones as it advanced ; we used to find their dead operators in our *trous de loup*, which showed that they were right up with the firing-line. With us touch was not infrequently lost even between whole corps and armies ! The necessity for remedying this grave defect is obvious, and we must practise how to do this in peace. Not a regiment should be allowed to advance at manœuvres without at once being connected up by telephone with its brigade commander and the divisional staff, and it is essential that, as the information comes in by telegraph and telephone, the divisional corps and army staffs should at once fix on the maps the positions

of both forces. Formerly commanders could watch the whole battlefield through a telescope from an eminence, could see their own troops, and could trace the position of the hostile infantry and artillery from the smoke. Now there is nothing to be seen. Often the troops are out of sight, and all that meets the eye are the puffs of smoke from the bursting shrapnel. Therefore orders and dispositions have to be worked out on the map, and we must learn how to keep these maps constantly up to time. In order that all intelligence may be at once noted, a “service of communication,” by means of motors, cyclists, and particularly of telegraph and telephone, might be organized, in addition to the ordinary reports brought in by mounted men. To attain these important results, considerable expense must be incurred in the creation of this “service of communication” or “service of information” of such a nature as to meet in every way the requirements of battle, of movement, and of rest.

An adequate number of sapper units with regiments will not only help us in the capture of fortified positions strengthened by obstacles, but will assist us rapidly to adapt them for defence when taken. The work of the mining company in future wars will be great both in attack and defence, especially in defence. It should have charge of all explosives required for demolitions, including mines, pyroxylite bombs,

and hand-grenades. The great effect of the bombs thrown by revolutionaries and anarchists points to their extensive use in war in the future. If fanatics can be found who will rush to certain death in order to kill peaceful citizens, it should certainly be possible to find devoted soldiers who will advance ahead of the firing-line and throw bombs into the enemy's obstacles.

Besides supply of field railway material for the army, each corps should have enough for thirty miles of line (steam or horse draught, according to circumstances).

ARTILLERY.

We have learnt by experience that skill in the employment of guns is more important than their number. Under modern battle conditions, when the position of a battery cannot be seen, a great deal of ammunition is fired during the artillery duel without any result. Two to four well-concealed guns cleverly moved from one position to another can hold their own with a brigade of artillery, and, if they can only range on the enemy's guns first, rapid fire gives them the power of inflicting heavy loss. Our keenest and most experienced gunners got on to the enemy on many occasions with great effect, but as a rule our artillery did little damage. One occasion when very ineffective results were obtained by us was at Hei-kou-tai, where, in

our endeavour to get possession of San-de-pu, we fired 70,000 rounds into every square,* except the one which actually contained the village. Our immense expenditure of ammunition also emphasized how carefully the question of the right proportion of guns in a force must be considered. In this war, owing to the great delay in sending up drafts to repair wastage, we were often actually handicapped by having too many guns! We frequently had to fight with divisions containing only some 6,000 to 8,000 men in the four regiments and the full forty-eight guns—a proportion of six to eight guns per 1,000 rifles, which is far too many. And our guns were literally an embarrassment, especially when they had run out of ammunition. Even assuming that we shall be able (as I have suggested) to place in the field regiments with a strength of 4,000 rifles, I consider it will be quite sufficient if we maintain the proportion of guns at forty-eight per division, or three guns per 1,000 rifles. The fire from quick-firing guns is nowadays quite powerful and effective enough for four guns to be considered a tactically independent fighting unit; but the formation of batteries of such a size is expensive, and requires too many men. It appears to be preferable, therefore, to abandon the artillery divisional organization, and return to the former

* [Presumably squares on a map.—ED.]

twelve-gun battery, dividing it into three companies, each of which would be in a tactical sense independent. The 48 guns—*i.e.*, four batteries—with an infantry division, would then be organized into an artillery regiment under the command of the divisional general. Each company would be commanded by a captain, the battery by a lieutenant-colonel, the regiment by a colonel.

We found that for mutual and smooth co-operation in battle it is most important that batteries should operate as far as possible with the same regiments of infantry. Close touch is established, and each arm unselfishly supports the other. I often heard the expression, “our battery,” “our regiment,” and in these simple words a deep, underlying sentiment was expressed. Each battery should be capable of acting independently of the artillery regiment to which it belongs. For hill warfare mountain artillery should be allotted to infantry in the same proportion as I have suggested for field artillery.

Our gun proved an excellent weapon; but our shrapnel, which was very effective against objects and troops in the open, was of no use against invisible targets, earthworks, and mud walls. Our artillery fire against villages held by the enemy, therefore, produced very little result. I consider that a new pattern of shell should be introduced with thicker walls

and a heavier bursting charge; but even then the effect of such light projectiles as our field-guns fire will not be great against the earth-works which are nowadays so quickly thrown up on positions. To prepare the way for the assault on such fortifications, and to obtain any speedy result in attacking defended localities, we must have field howitzers of a modern type. They should be organized in regiments of two batteries (twenty-four howitzers), and attached to a corps as corps artillery. Finally, it is essential that every army should have a light siege-train to assist in the capture of strongly defended posts and heavy works.

The organization of park units was well conceived, but the vehicles were unsuited to the Manchurian roads. I am afraid to express an opinion in favour of a further increase of mobile parks, because we were so overburdened with baggage of different kinds. I think it is preferable to improvise local parks at railway-stations and junctions, as we did in Manchuria.

Small-arm ammunition rarely ran short, but there was often a great lack of gun ammunition, and after the battles of Liao-yang, the Sha Ho, and Mukden, our reserves for filling up battery and park stocks were exhausted. The average expenditure of rifle ammunition worked out as follows: For a whole-day battle for one battalion, 21,000 rounds, with a maximum of 400,000; an

hour's fighting for one battalion, 1,700, with a maximum of 67,000. The total reserve taken with a four-battalion infantry regiment was 800,000. The average expenditure per quick-firing field-gun in a one-day battle worked out at 55 rounds, with a maximum of 522 ; an hour's fighting, 10 rounds, with a maximum of 210.

In the earlier fights the work of the artillery varied a good deal, and was not very successful ; but as they gained experience, many batteries fought splendidly, not only against guns, but against rifle-fire. Compared with the work of our artillery in 1877-78 (in the European theatre of operations), we have made considerable progress in skill, and the very heavy losses in killed and wounded in many batteries prove that our gunners know how to die. The horse artillery work depended entirely on the commanders of the cavalry units to which the batteries were attached, and when these commanders really meant fighting the batteries did good work. As a proof of this, it is enough to recall the gallant conduct of the 1st Trans-Baikal Cossack Horse Artillery Battery attached to Mischenko's Trans-Baikal Cossack Brigade. This battery and its young commander were known to the whole army ; more than once it successfully fought several of the enemy's batteries, and yet its losses were insignificant. Sometimes our cavalry leaders were unnecessarily anxious to

retire, as was the case in the cavalry of the 2nd Army at the battle of Mukden, when the two batteries which were with it lost *only two men wounded and one missing in eleven days' fighting*. One six-gun battery was sufficient for four mounted regiments of such strength as we had. As said above, there should be one artillery regiment of four batteries (48 guns) with each infantry division, or a total of 144 guns for the three divisions. These three regiments would be organized in a brigade. There should also be one regiment of 24 howitzers with each corps.

CAVALRY.

Though our cavalry was numerous, its work hardly came up to our expectations, but where it was properly commanded it did well enough. In my opinion, the main reform that is necessary in the cavalry is to improve their training. Till it is educated to feel that it should fight as *obstinately as infantry*, the money expended on our mounted Arm will be thrown away. If infantry can still continue fighting after losing 50 per cent. of their strength, cavalry should be able to do the same. In action we nursed the cavalry too much; out of action we did not take sufficient care of it. Though they had not lost a man, whole regiments were moved to the rear as soon as the first shrapnel began bursting near them. The four regiments of cavalry—two

dragoon and two Cossack—on whom fell the most difficult but the most honourable duty of obtaining information and opposing the leading units of Nogi's enveloping forces at the battle of Mukden, lost in killed and wounded :

					Men.
February 25	...	...	...	...	2
March 2	...	...	...	...	1
March 4	...	...	...	...	1
March 5	...	...	...	...	7
March 6	...	...	...	...	2
March 7	...	...	...	...	6
March 8	...	...	...	...	1
March 9	...	...	...	...	1
March 10	...	...	...	...	1
					—
Total	...	...	...	...	22

Which works out at less than one man per squadron and *sotnia*. The casualties in almost every company of infantry were more than in these twenty-four squadrons and *sotnias*. It is quite plain that these units did not fight, but merely avoided the enemy ; and it is equally plain that, by avoiding battle, the cavalry neither checked the enemy's movement nor got any information about him. The material of which our cavalry was composed was excellent, but everything depended on those in command. In the battle of Te-li-ssu the infantry of the 1st Siberian Corps lost 2,500 men ; the Primorsk Dragoon Regiment, belonging to the same corps, lost one !

But I repeat that where their leaders meant fighting the cavalry did their duty and suffered heavily. Take, for example, the Trans-Baikal Cossacks, which did so well under Mischenko, and the Caucasian Brigade. The Siberian Cossacks, under Samsonoff, fought at Liao-yang and the Yen-tai Mines with greater bravery than was displayed by some of Orloff's infantry, while the independent *sotnias* of the Don and Orenburg Voiskos, and the dragoons under Stakhovitch, were no whit behind them. Indeed, the men of the Primorsk Dragoon Regiment were good enough ; it was the officers who failed in not getting the best out of them. The independent units of all the Cossacks did well, but it was out of the question to expect martial ardour or a keen desire to perform feats of gallantry in old men such as formed the 3rd Category Cossack regiments. But even these 3rd Category regiments could do good work when skilfully handled. The Cossack horses generally, and the Trans-Baikal horses in particular, were too small ; while those of the Don regiments were sturdy, but rather soft. The Trans-Baikal Cossacks on their shaggy little ponies reminded one more of mounted infantry than cavalry. On the whole, however, our cavalry worked far better than in the Russo-Turkish War under Generals Kuiloff and Losh-kareff at Plevna. The great difficulty now is

to find and train cavalry leaders ; in Manchuria, according to most accounts, the juniors were good, the field officers moderate, and the general officers, with few exceptions, bad.

The personality of the officer in command of a regiment of cavalry is a very important factor, as his merits and weak points are very quickly known, and as soon as a man in such a post shows himself unsuitable he should be removed. (This also applies to the general officers.) But I rarely found a divisional or corps commander who would report on the unsuitability of senior commanders under them ; they even concealed cases of cowardice. It was only at the conclusion of hostilities that it transpired that several had not only shown a lack of keenness, but even of personal courage. Some of the regimental commanders were very old ; at fifty-five a man is too old for the command of a regiment. As in the infantry, the post of cavalry brigadier should be improved, and made a more important appointment. To it should be given the executive and administrative powers now wielded by divisional generals.

Three brigades should be formed into a division, the divisional general being given the powers of an army corps commander. There is no necessity for a higher organization. To the division of three brigades should be allotted a twelve-gun battery of horse artillery (three companies of four guns each). To every three-division army corps

should be added one cavalry or Cossack brigade. One of the regiments of this brigade should act as divisional cavalry, two squadrons or *sotnias* with each division. If it is thought desirable that commanders of infantry divisions become acquainted with cavalry in peace-time, then two squadrons should be stationed in the area of the divisions under them.

INFANTRY.

As in former wars, so in Manchuria was the heat and burden of the day borne by our infantry, and there is no doubt that, in the future, infantry will retain its name as the principal Arm. The importance of other Arms depends entirely on the extent to which they assist infantry to defeat the enemy, for the latter is the final arbiter of victory or defeat. But infantry cannot work alone, and nowadays, if it is not assisted in action by artillery, cavalry, and sappers, if every resource of modern science is not brought into play to lighten its heavy task, it will either fail or will buy victory at too high a price. It is to infantry, as the principal Arm, that we must pay our chief attention. *And yet with us service in the Line is not considered so honourable as service in the other branches!* From the moment of the selection of its recruits we do everything to weaken it. Even the pattern of uniform worn by our Line infantryman is particularly ugly. In his old-

fashioned, badly fitting tunic, overburdened with haversacks and equipment of all sorts, he is anything but a martial sight. This is an aspect of the case which cannot be ignored, and it is almost as important that a man's uniform should be comfortable and attractive as that it should meet all the purely military requirements. All ranks should be enabled to admire their own dress and be proud of it. Up to the present, the majority of Line officers have not been given a good enough general or military education. Officers of all arms should receive a general education not lower than the intermediate standard of the national educational establishments, and a military education not lower than that of the military schools. We should teach the line officer to have a love and respect for the Arm in which he serves, as well as a knowledge of its particular rôle in battle, and must therefore raise his social position so that he may be a welcome guest in any society. We must provide him with a comfortable, inexpensive, and smart uniform. We must protect him from being abused by his seniors in the presence of his juniors, and in every possible manner encourage the development in him of an independent spirit. Bravery alone is not sufficient nowadays to attain victory ; knowledge, initiative, and willingness to accept responsibility are also required. Infantry have always had a hard part in action,

and have always suffered great loss, but the modern battle which lasts for days makes greater demands upon their mental and physical endurance than ever before. With a large proportion of reservists and short-service men, we cannot rely on perfection in the soldier ; it is therefore all the more necessary that we should take steps to obtain it in our officers, and for this purpose we are lucky in having excellent and responsive material. Under all the arduous conditions under which the majority of our regiments had to fight, the greatest trials fell to the infantry officer, and right well he did his duty. It is quite enough to compare the casualties amongst those officers with those of their brothers in the cavalry, artillery, and sappers to see on whom fell the chief hardships and dangers. In some regiments the whole set of officers was changed several times. The following figures serve as an illustration of how they suffered :

Killed and
Wounded.

The 3rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment lost ...	102
The 34th East Siberian Rifle Regiment lost...	89
The 36th East Siberian Rifle Regiment lost...	73
The 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment lost ...	71
The 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment lost ...	61
The 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment lost...	50

It is impossible to recall the gallant war services of these and of the officers of many other regiments without profound respect and emotion.

It must always be borne in mind that the infantry of the Line is the backbone of our Service in peace as well as in war. Consequently, we should make much more of those who serve in it than we do, and give them a better chance. At present the list of regimental commanding officers includes far too many Guardsmen or officers of the General Staff. I am convinced that if the importance of service in the Line is to be maintained, we must put an end to the present unfair acceleration of promotion amongst Guards and General Staff officers as compared with that of their brothers. The latter produce a great many men capable of being good regimental commanders ; all that is wanted is to know how to select them. Since the last Turkish War they have undoubtedly made considerable progress, and it is for us to arrange that this improvement is continued by fostering it in every way.

Owing to casualties, the company commanders were changed too often for efficiency, but they generally performed good service, lack of initiative being, as usual, their chief fault. It is most important for the good of the Service that captains (of all arms) displaying distinguished military qualifications should be quickly promoted to field rank. Yet recommendations sent to St. Petersburg were not acted on for a very long time, if ever. In such a matter some discretion

should be allowed the Commander-in-Chief, and he should be empowered to promote junior officers to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel for distinguished service in the field. Special men would thus arrive at the command of independent units and regiments, posts where the personality of the man in command is so important. It often happened that a regiment which had done badly absolutely changed its character with a change of commanding officers. Seniority should not be the only guide for promotion, and the establishment of field-officers in Manchuria constituted a quite adequate number from which good regimental commanders could have been liberally selected. During the period when we were occupying the Hsi-ping-kai positions, many of the regimental commanders in all the armies were good men, and the 1st Army was particularly lucky in this respect. Though many of the infantry brigadiers who came out to the war proved failures, amongst the regimental commanders were many capable field-officers, whose advancement to the rank of General gave us some first-class brigade commanders. In the 1st Army alone were Major-Generals Lechitski, Stelnitski, Dushkevitch, Lesha, Riedko, Dobotin, etc. Thus, even under the unfavourable conditions under which they served, we found enough good material amongst our infantry officers to give us some confidence for the future. Had

the war been continued, many of the colonels promoted to generals for distinguished service would have commanded divisions. This is as it should be, for it ought to be possible for a regimental commander to rise within a year to the command even of an army corps, if he be sufficiently brilliant.

I repeat that the tasks which fall upon infantry in battle nowadays are of such exceptional difficulty that the promotion of its officers for distinguished field service should be made exceptionally rapid. I am aware that even a good regimental commander may make a bad divisional general ; but I also maintain that a regimental commander who has successfully commanded in several fights, has shown a knowledge of his work, keenness, enterprise, and personal bravery, and has won the confidence of his men, should be promoted as quickly as possible. He may find it difficult at first to get his bearings under the new and more complicated conditions of a high command, where he has to rely upon maps and the reports of others instead of upon the direct evidence of his own eyes and ears, but still he will grapple with the situation, even of an army corps commander, far better than some general whose experience has been confined to office-work and peace manœuvres.

Finally, in order to give due importance to the principal Arm—infantry (infantry of the Line in

particular)—I consider the following measures necessary :

1. To give a better education to the officers entering it.
2. To improve their material and social position.
3. To provide officers and men with a smarter uniform.
4. To accelerate their promotion and put an end to the system by which Guardsmen and officers of the General Staff get more rapid advancement, and so block the way of their unfortunate brothers to regimental and divisional commands.
5. To facilitate as much as possible the special promotion in war of distinguished company officers to field rank.
6. To award regimental commanders who display particular merit on service rapid advancement to the rank of General, without regard to their seniority or the speed of their promotion.

The two last of these recommendations also obviously apply to officers of the other Arms.

ORGANIZATION.

In my opinion, our experiences in the recent war have shown the necessity for such an organization in our army as I will now describe :

Infantry Regiment : To consist of 4 battalions, each of 4 companies. Each company to have a strength of 250 combatants. In

addition to the 16 combatant companies per regiment, there should be scout sections (mounted and dismounted), and machine-gun sections with 16 portable guns. Strength of regiment, 5,000 men.

Cavalry and Cossack Regiments : As at present.

Infantry Brigade : 2 regiments, 8 battalions.

Cavalry Brigade : 2 regiments, 12 squadrons or *sotnias*.

All brigades should be capable of acting independently.

Infantry Division : To consist of 2 infantry brigades, 1 regiment of artillery,* 1 sapper battalion, 1 telegraph company, 2 squadrons or *sotnias* of cavalry, transport company, parks, bakeries, hospitals. Total, 17 battalions, 48 guns, and 2 squadrons or *sotnias*.

Cavalry Division : To consist of 3 separate brigades, 1 horse artillery battery. Total, 36 squadrons or *sotnias*, and 12 guns.

Army Corps : To consist of 3 infantry divisions, 1 artillery brigade, including a regiment of howitzers, 1 cavalry brigade,† 1 sapper brigade,‡

* Artillery regiments to be subordinate in all respects as regards command to the divisional commander. The commander of an artillery brigade must technically superintend and inspect all batteries with an army corps.

† One cavalry regiment per division.

‡ One sapper battalion and one company of sappers per division; one mining and two telegraph companies as corps troops.

1 transport battalion, 1 battalion for camps on the line of communication. Total, 48 battalions, 169 guns, 12 squadrons or *sotnias*, and 3 sapper battalions.

Reserve Troops: To be formed into independent brigades, to which the reserve units of artillery, cavalry, and sappers should be attached. Each brigade to consist of 8 battalions, 2 batteries (24 guns), 1 squadron or *sotnia*, 2 sapper companies, half a company of telegraphists, transport, hospitals, and bakeries. These brigades, being organized on an independent footing, would be attached to the armies ; they would be detailed either as part of the army reserve or for independent work in guarding the flanks and rear, or be joined to corps, according to circumstances.

This, I think, will give great independence to all units, and the creation of independent reserve brigades, outside of the divisional and corps organization, would often prevent the breaking up of this organization when a battle was in progress. To organize reserve field troops beforehand in field formations, such as divisions of three brigades, or corps, is not a convenient or suitable arrangement, as they will not be ready to take part in the fighting as soon as the regulars.

Amongst steps which will raise the status of regimental service, and so attract the best men to it, I consider it necessary, in addition to

providing an attractive uniform, to establish ranks distinct from those borne by officers on the staff, in administrative offices, and in departments. According to the scale of our military hierarchy, the various commands (exclusive of the Cossack troops) carry ranks as follows :

Sub-Lieutenant, Cornet, Lieutenant, and Staff-Captain in the different Arms are the ranks given to the junior officers in companies, squadrons, and batteries.

A Captain commands a company or a squadron.

A Lieutenant-Colonel commands a battalion, a battery, and a cavalry division.*

A Colonel commands a regiment and a division of artillery.

A Major-General commands a brigade.

A Lieutenant-General commands a division.

A Lieutenant-General or a full General commands an army corps or a military district.

All these ranks are also conferred on officers serving on the staff and in departments. Thus, the rank of Colonel, which ought only to be given to men in command of regiments, is also borne by those on the administrative and police staffs, while generals of all grades, who have never held command of troops or even of small units, fill up our Generals list. At the time

* [Sic. This word is rather misleading. Some formation less than a regiment is meant.—Ed.]

I framed the regulation to limit the number of promotions to General's rank of men not actually in the army I was much bothered by numerous officers who feared that their further promotion might be blocked. The present large number of ranks amongst the officer class is not required. It is quite possible to reduce them, and to give to these their old Russian names (to which the Cossack* troops still adhere), for officers of all Arms doing regimental service—namely, *Khorunji*, *Sotnik*, and *Esaoul*. The rank of *Pod-esaoul*, which was adopted later, might be excluded. *Esaouls* would command companies, squadrons, *sotnias*, and companies (of artillery); *Sotniks* would command half-companies, half-squadrons; and *Khorunjis* would command sections. The normal establishment of a company would be one *Esaoul*, two *Sotniks*, and four *Khorunjis*. The same should be done in the cavalry. For those not serving regimentally the ranks of Ensign, Lieutenant, and Captain might be maintained, those of Sub-Lieutenant and Staff-Captain being abolished. The present ranks of field-officers might be conferred on those officers not doing regimental service, and the titles of *Voiskovoi Starshina* and

* *Voiskovoi Starshina* = Lieutenant-Colonel
 Esaoul = Captain
 Sotnik = Lieutenant
 Khorunji = Cornet } Of Cossacks.

Colonel on those with regiments. The first would command a battalion, a division of cavalry or artillery; the second, regiments of all Arms. The rank of Lieutenant-Colonel to be kept for staff and departmental officers, and the rank of Major should be introduced instead of that of Colonel. The names of the ranks of those serving with troops to correspond generally to the nature of the appointment; thus, officers commanding brigades should be called Brigadiers, those in charge of divisions Divisional Generals, of an army corps, Corps Generals. The latter rank should also be given to commanders of military districts and their assistants. The only officers not actually serving with troops who should be allowed to have the title of Corps General should be three: the War Minister and the chiefs of the General and Headquarter Staffs. For service away from troops only two ranks of General should be maintained—Major-General and Lieutenant-General. The titles Generals of Infantry and Cavalry, etc., should be abolished. The grading would then be as follows:

A.—FOR REGIMENTAL SERVICE.

Commander of section ...	...	...	...	Khorunji.
Commander of half-company, half-squadron, half- <i>sotnia</i> ...	...	...	...	Sotnik.
Commander of company, squadron, <i>sotnia</i> , artillery company ...	...	...	...	Esaoul.

Commanding battalion, battery, division of cavalry	...	...	Voiskovoi Starshina.
Commanding regiment	...	...	Colonel.
Commander of brigade	...	...	Brigadier.
Commander of division	...	...	Divisional General.
Commander of corps	...	...	Corps General.

B.—FOR EXTRA REGIMENTAL SERVICE.

Ensign, Lieutenant, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Major, Major-General, and Lieutenant-General.

Except in the case of the chief staff-officers of districts, the transfer of general officers not with troops to service with troops should be forbidden. The appointments of Corps Chief Staff-officers and Quartermaster-Generals on the staffs of districts should carry the rank of Major. Officers going into other departments should take purely civil rank, and promotion on retirement should be abolished. To accelerate the advancement of specially distinguished colonels, it should be possible to appoint them to brigades with the rank of Brigadier. There is at present great confusion in this matter of accelerated promotion in deserving cases, for colonels can be given the command of independent brigades, and yet not of non-independent ones.

As war is a greater strain on the officers than on the men, it is important, when granting special privileges for regimental service to the latter, that great care should be taken to insure their physical fitness. A particularly bad form

of unfitness is that caused by corpulence, and, unfortunately, many even of our company officers suffered from this in Manchuria. One of our regimental commanders was so stout that he was practically helpless, and was taken prisoner at Te-li-ssu, though unwounded! As to the rank and file, hill-climbing with an 80-pound equipment makes campaigning very arduous for those of forty years of age or over. Company and field officers can well serve up to fifty, but commanding officers of cavalry should not be over fifty, and of infantry regiments over fifty-five. The age-limit for generals in command of brigades and divisions should be sixty, and of corps sixty-three. The necessity for the age regulations we now have became apparent during the war, for as a result of them our field-officers were relatively young; but our experience proves that the limit should be still further lowered in the direction I have mentioned.

The proposals set forth above, which it is thought would tend to increase our fighting efficiency, are, after all, only details of organization and of preparation. The main factors contributing to insure victory are the same as they always have been—a high *moral* and the power of rapid concentration in superior strength. Diplomacy must prepare for the struggle so as to enable all the armed forces of the Empire to be put into the field if necessary, and we must

have numerous efficient railways to facilitate the rapid massing of superior numbers. On these two most important factors will depend the plan of campaign. The ability to assume the offensive bestows an immense superiority, for it gives the initiative to the side which undertakes it. The defender's leading troops are compelled to fall back, his less prepared troops are perhaps crushed, while his reinforcements are destroyed piecemeal. The result is that the *moral* of the attacker increases, while that of the enemy inevitably diminishes. To re-establish a balance under such conditions is not only a matter of time, but is extremely difficult. With a defensive plan of operations, unshakeable belief in eventual success and immense patience are necessary in order to overcome all difficulties, and to defeat the foe with a final assumption of the offensive.

From the short sketch I have given of what was accomplished by the Russian armed forces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is seen that we took the offensive in the majority of the wars we were engaged in. Without railways, but with a large peace standing army (period of service twenty-five years with the colours), with equality and often a superiority* in armament and training, Russia was able to

* In the wars with Turkey and Persia, in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

commence operations, and to force her will upon the enemy—*i.e.*, to assume the offensive. Nowadays we have been left behind by our Western neighbours in readiness for hostilities, and the recent war disclosed the fact that we had been outdistanced by our Eastern neighbour also. Russia will, no doubt, in time find the strength and means once more to take her former place amongst other Powers as regards fighting efficiency; but it will take years of unceasing effort, for rapid concentration and an offensive strategy are impossible without great developments in our railway system. No one can say whether we shall be allowed to wait for everything to be perfected, or whether we shall again be drawn into war before we are ready. It is therefore absolutely necessary to prepare without loss of time to make war under conditions as unfavourable as those of the recent conflict.

Without referring here to the necessity for diplomatic preparation for hostilities, and the proper attitude of all grades of Russian society during war, I will comment in the most general lines on those measures which should, in my opinion, be taken for the more useful employment of resources already at our disposal. The principle which is of such importance in field operations, that troops once engaged will not be relieved, must be finally accepted. Therefore,

every unit going into action should know that it will be supported, but not replaced. The principle in its broadest sense applies without distinction to all ranks who join the field army, and till victory has been attained not a soul should be able to return home or receive another appointment outside the theatre of operations. Those who prove themselves unfit for their appointments at the actual front should be given other employments for which their bodily and mental qualifications are fitted. In such a serious business as war in defence of country no personal ambition should or can have place, and the removal of a person from the field army should be considered the greatest possible disgrace—a stain which the service of a lifetime cannot efface. Officers thus removed should be deprived of their military rank, dismissed the Service, and should forfeit all rights and privileges gained in the Service, and officers and men so removed should be deprived of the right to hold any Government post whatever, whether under the War Department or not.

The punishment for cowardice should be death.

I have touched upon the question of accelerated promotion for good service in the field, and the converse applies. Senior commanders who show themselves unfit for their appointments ought to be at once removed from their commands and given posts corresponding to their capabilities.

Commanders of corps and divisions considered unfit may, in order to guard their military honour, request to be allowed to remain in the army in command of divisions or brigades. Only one kind of seniority can be acknowledged in war—namely, the ability to gain the victory. General officers incompetent for field service can do very useful work on the lines of communications, in the direction and training of the reserve troops, the management of hospitals, the administration of the inhabitants of the country, etc. If we ever mean to be capable of defeating a powerful enemy, we must not allow an army corps commander who is struck off from the command of his corps, and who does not even display personal courage, to become a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence; nor must we allow junior commanders who fail when tested by war to receive appointments in non-mobilized units, nor permit hundreds of officers who leave the front on account of ill-health, and under various pretexts, to remain away and not return. I say nothing of the case where an army commander leaves his army during active hostilities without even reporting his departure to the Commander-in-Chief.

If courts of honour are found to be a necessity in peace-time, how much more are they necessary in war? In addition to being formed in regiments, they should be formed in corps and

armies to adjudicate upon the conduct in action of senior commanders up to the rank of Divisional General. It is vital that the existing immunity of men who show cowardice in action, or who are guilty of disgraceful conduct out of action, should at once cease. For this purpose I consider we should form soldiers' courts of honour in every company and independent unit, as a means for suppressing the worst elements found in the ranks. For, with the lack of moral development of the modern man in the street, it is absolutely necessary to have some such tribunals upon whose verdict corporal punishment can be awarded to private soldiers. To leave the field under the pretext of assisting or carrying away the wounded—except for the men specially detailed for this duty—should be punished with the utmost rigour. And to fight an action to a finish, officers must not hesitate to sacrifice their last reserves, if necessary, and also themselves. It is necessary to draw attention to this, as instances occurred in the war where officers, having given orders for a retirement, were themselves the first to go. Such an example is always infectious, and leads to disorganization of units and loss of confidence in the commander. Commanders of forces who do not in battle support neighbouring units when able to do so should be deprived of their appointments, tried, and, if necessary, punished by death. Commanders of

all ranks should be thoroughly alive to the value of every man in the ranks. Therefore, every endeavour should be made to keep units as strong as possible during an action.

Finally, I will touch briefly on several points. I will permit myself to express the opinion that the existing regulations as to rewards in war require revision and considerable alteration. At present far too many honours are bestowed. Another point that demands attention is that of malingering. As we have seen, sickness was more prevalent amongst the officers, in spite of their better living, than among the men. Unfortunately, also, the medical officers more than once called my attention, when I was inspecting hospitals, to cases of malingering amongst officers as well as men. The great majority of patients, of course, were really ill, but much of the sickness was due to the individual not taking proper care of himself. Officers must realize that, however honourable a thing it is to be wounded, it is as dishonourable to remain in hospital when their comrades are fighting. It should be ruled for all ranks that in such cases the period of sickness should not count as service, and that during it pay should be forfeited. All officers and officials absenting themselves for more than two months should be removed from their appointments, and appointed to the reserve or dépôt troops. Amongst the many regrettable things to be

noted in the late war was the disgraceful conditions under which both men and officers were often taken prisoner. The existing regulations, which lay down that all the circumstances of a case of capture should be investigated, were not complied with. Officers who returned straight to Russia from being prisoners in Japan were appointed by the War Department even to the command of divisions. There is only one thing which justifies capture—the fact of being wounded. All those who surrender when they have not been wounded should be tried by court-martial for not fighting to the last.

The regulations regarding fortresses should be revised, and the occasions upon which a fortress is allowed to surrender should be absolutely cut out, for fortresses may be taken, but should never, under any circumstances, surrender. Commandants of fortresses who surrender them, captains who surrender their ships, officers in command of units that lay down their arms, should be considered as forfeiting all rights, and should be condemned to be shot without trial, and all those not in command who surrender unwounded should be deprived of their military rank from the day of their surrender. During the war the Press did much to undermine the authority of officers in command, and to lower the *moral* of the men, by indiscriminate revelations. In the next war only such events should

be allowed to appear in the newspapers as may help to encourage the men. When active operations are over, the circumstances are changed, and it is then essential for the good of the Service to have a thorough investigation into all shortcomings.

But it is not sufficient that all ranks of the army should be imbued with the spirit of fighting on till victory is won ; it is necessary that the whole nation should have the same feeling, and to the best of their ability assist towards a happy issue of the struggle being carried on by the army. In our state of backwardness (especially as regards railways) we are doomed in our next war to a slow concentration, and therefore to a protracted campaign. Being unable at once to put large forces into the field, and to seize the initiative, we may again be compelled to bear the consequences of our unreadiness—frequent reverses, and retirement ; but we must, without wavering, firmly believe in eventual success, however unfavourable the conditions at the start. The moral and material resources of Russia are immense, and the fixed determination on the part of the army and the whole nation to win is our principal guarantee of victory.

CHAPTER XII

SUMMARY OF THE WAR

I HAVE already reviewed* (in Chapters VIII., IX., X., and XI.) the causes of our failure. They can be summarized in three groups:

1. Those causes independent of the War Ministry.
2. Those dependent on the War Ministry, for which officers in the field had no responsibility.
3. Those for which officers in the field were alone responsible.

The first group comprises—

- (a) The absence of any diplomatic arrangement which would have enabled us to despatch and distribute our whole army freely as circumstances dictated (similar to that which in 1870-71 made it possible for the Prussians

* [The first portion of this chapter, which is a recapitulation of what has already been written in Chapters I. to VII., has been omitted from this translation. What is now given touches more upon the war itself.—ED.]

to move the whole of their armed forces against France).

(b) The subordinate part played by the fleet during the war.

(c) The inferiority of the Siberian and Eastern Chinese Railways.

(d) The internal disorders in Russia, which affected the spirit of the army.

The second group comprises—

(a) The delay in mobilizing the reinforcements for the Far East.

(b) The transfer into the reserve during the war of well-trained soldiers—men who were still liable for colour service—from the military districts in European Russia, while untrained elderly reservists were being sent to the front.

(c) The belated despatch of drafts to the front. (The reason of this was also the inefficiency of the railways.)

(d) The delay in promoting those who particularly distinguished themselves in the field. (Many recommendations were ignored.)

(e) The deficiencies in our technical equipment.

(f) The faults of organization (absence of troops for protecting communications, dearth of transport, unwieldiness of the army and corps organizations).

(g) Deficiencies in the *personnel* both of officers and men.

The third group comprises—

(a) The absence of a true military feeling among the troops.

(b) The poor spirit in action shown by some of them.

(c) The lack of determination on the part of commanders of all degrees to carry out the tasks entrusted to them.

(d) The breakdown of the organization under the stress of war.

The weak points of our forces, which were so noticeable in the wars waged in the second half of the last century, had not been entirely eliminated during the fifty years which intervened since the Crimea, and were again evident in the recent struggle—namely :

1. We were inferior to our enemy in technical troops and equipment.

2. The “command” was unsatisfactory.

3. The army was insufficiently trained tactically.

4. We did not insure victory by having considerable superiority in numbers.

We did not have before us any clear idea of our object, and consequently did not show sufficient determination in its prosecution.

So many different reasons have been advanced for our failure that the question naturally arises as to what foundation there really is for my opinion—shared by the greater part of the army

in the field—that if we had not concluded peace so hastily victory would have crowned our arms.

My belief that we could, and ought to, have issued victorious from the struggle is based upon—

- I. The steady growth of our material forces.
- II. The growth of our moral forces.
- III. The gradual deterioration of the enemy in both respects.

I.

We have already seen how fatal the inefficiency of our railways was for us. Yet, though six months before the outbreak of war only two pairs of short trains were available for military purposes, when peace was concluded we had ten and even twelve pairs of full trains running in the twenty-four hours. Thus, during hostilities the carrying capacity of the railway grew sixfold, and was capable of still further increase. Notwithstanding all our reverses, the army continued to grow in numbers, and was 1,000,000 strong when peace was concluded, and more than two-thirds of this number (including the newly arrived drafts, the new corps, and the Pri-Amur troops) had not been under fire. Moreover, owing to improved rail transport and the proper exploitation of all local resources, the whole number was assured of everything necessary,

both for fighting and subsistence, to an extent that had never previously been the case. We had received a proper proportion of artillery of every nature, reserves of light railway material, telegraph and wireless telegraph stores, and entrenching and technical tools and equipment of all sorts. We had constructed three strong lines of defence at Hsi-ping-kai, Kung-chu-ling, and Kwang-cheng-tzu ; our communications in rear were safe ; almost every army corps was in possession of its own line of rails ; and the Sungari and other rivers were crossed by many bridges. The war strength of all units had been considerably augmented. Russia's resources for continuing the struggle were greater than those of Japan, for not only had our Guards and Grenadiers not been drawn upon, but the greater part of the army was still at home.

II.

Though an improvement of *moral* is by no means as easy to bring about in an army as that of its material condition, the officers who were most in touch with our men were convinced that it was done in our case. It may possibly be a peculiarity of the Russian soldier that he possesses latent moral strength of the kind which is developed slowly, and not destroyed by any trials to which the individual is subjected ; but to those who made a study

of the war it appeared perfectly clear that our men showed an increasing spirit of stubborn determination as the campaign progressed. In the early fights before the battle of Liao-yang—at Te-li-ssu and Ta-shih-chiao—we withdrew after comparatively small losses. At the latter fight two army corps, and at Yang-tzu-ling one corps, retired, though they together did not collectively lose as many men as the 1st East Siberian Rifle Regiment alone lost in the battle of Mukden. At Liao-yang our men fought better than in the previous fights ; on the Sha Ho they showed a better spirit than at Liao-yang ; while at Mukden many units showed a still further improvement. We were all convinced, therefore, that in a defence of, or an offensive advance from, the Hsi-ping-kai position, the men would fight even better than at Mukden, for the improvement in spirit shown by our troops had been progressive and steady. They had learned much, particularly during their long stay in direct touch with the enemy on the Sha Ho. Even the reserve units, which failed in the early fights, fought with great bravery and steadiness at Mukden. To prove this, it is only necessary to recall the exploits of the 71st and 54th Divisions, the later arrived reserve units of the 55th and 61st Divisions at Mukden, and of many regiments of the 10th, 17th, and 1st Army Corps. The regiments of the

4th Siberian Corps and the East Siberian Rifles, indeed, were an example throughout the war.

The Tsar, in his Order to the army and fleet of January 14, 1905, predicted this improvement in the *moral* of the troops, notwithstanding their reverses, with great foresight. His belief in the spirit of the army was expressed in the following memorable words :

“ Though we may be sore at heart on account of the disasters and losses that have befallen us, do not let us be discouraged. By them Russia’s strength is renewed, and her power increased.”

As operations continued we made corresponding progress in our tactics. We learned how to attack and make use of the ground, and how to employ artillery, and learned by heart the lesson of keeping strong reserves in hand [at the Hsi-ping-kai position the reserve of the 1st Manchurian Army alone consisted of eighty battalions]. We also learned how to obtain intelligence of hostile forces. At the close of the war our knowledge of the Japanese dispositions was more complete than it had ever been ; indeed, we had accurate information of the exact whereabouts, not only of their main bodies, but also of many individual units. (This was chiefly obtained from prisoners.)

We received as reinforcements 300,000 regular soldiers then with the colours, most of whom

had volunteered for the front, and the 1905 recruits. These young soldiers were ready to face any danger; they arrived in the highest spirits, and their cheerfulness and evident keenness to see some fighting did one's heart good. The older reservists were mostly employed on duties in the rear. As a result, volunteers were always forthcoming for the numerous raids and reconnaissances made by the 1st Manchurian Army from the Hsi-ping-kai position, or for any other adventurous work. The mainspring of the improvement in our spirit, however, was the more careful selection made of the officers appointed to command units. Many of these now began to display military qualifications of a high order. The fighting round Mukden had produced generals of a calibre upon which we could have fully relied in any subsequent battles. As regards the general question of the readiness of the 1st Manchurian Army for renewed fighting after the Mukden battle, I concluded my report on this force as follows:

“With the occupation of the Hsi-ping-kai position the army found itself confronted with a great work.

“No map of the neighbouring country existed, and the little information we had of the enemy was chiefly remarkable for its absolute vagueness. There were no roads to the rear, no local dépôts for the supply of the army, and no fords over the Sungari River, which was a standing

menace, as the usual Spring floods were still ahead of us.

“The co-ordinated and willing efforts of all ranks, however, soon changed all this. The fortified line of works from Hsi-ping-kai Station to the village of Kung-chu-ling became practically invincible, and the order was given to use it as a *place d'armes* and accumulate strong reserves there. In May there were eighty battalions in reserve behind the left flank; practically one-half of the five army corps was located here.

“A two-verst* map was made, showing not only the country in our rear, but the strip of ground right up to the enemy's positions.

“By means of reconnaissances and the employment of spies, we gradually sifted our inaccurate intelligence till our information was correct. We were able first to locate the disposition of the enemy's armies, then of his divisions, and, finally, of small units.

“The services to the rear were carried out with similar energy; roads were laid out, the Sungari was bridged, and storehouses were built.

“At the beginning of July the army was almost ready to advance; the only thing lacking was the equipment for light railways for horse traction. Without this it was impossible to advance in any great strength.

“During the last few months a horse railway was laid to Ya-mu-tzu, and the carriage of supplies for a forward movement was thus assured.

“A connected series of reconnaissances were carried out in order to gain knowledge of the ground in front.

“The army was brought almost up to full strength by the drafts and new units which had joined.

* [About 1½ miles to the inch.—ED.]

"In August it was quite ready for battle, and its now recuperated and reinforced veteran corps waited the order for a forward movement in complete confidence."

General Bilderling, who commanded the 2nd Manchurian Army (which suffered the most heavily at Mukden), finishes his report on this army as follows :

"The army occupied the Hsi-ping-kai position, shattered and disorganized by the battle of Mukden ; but it has recovered with extraordinary rapidity. With the arrival of the young soldiers and reservists, all the units have been brought up to full war strength, and it is only in the officers that there is still a great deficiency. The mounted units have been reinforced by fresh squadrons and by horses from the artillery reserve ; the guns and waggons which were lost or had become unserviceable have been replaced. Every division has been strengthened by mounted and dismounted machine-gun sections, and howitzer batteries have been formed ; a light railway for horse-draught has been laid along the whole length of the position and in rear of it ; and, profiting by recent experience, the troops are now thoroughly proficient in all exercises and manœuvres. Thus the army, by reason of its numbers, material composition, and training, has become really better prepared for hostilities at the close of the war than it was at the beginning, and again constitutes a menace to the enemy."

The 3rd Manchurian Army, which, under the command of General Batianoff, formed a reserve for the 1st and 2nd Armies, and contained corps

which had arrived latest and had not been in action, was also a large and reliable body of men.

Of course, there is a skeleton in every cupboard, and naturally in such a large force as the three armies constituted there were weak spots. Thus, there were to be found amongst the men, and even the officers, a certain number of poor-spirited creatures who disbelieved in the possibility of victory. But even such characters would have plucked up their spirits and done good service at the first success.

From the moment I joined the army in Manchuria, I invariably told every unit that I met or reviewed that the war could only end after we had been victorious; that till then none of us would be allowed to return home; and that victory was certain when sufficient reinforcements reached us. And belief in these facts sank into the hearts of officers and private soldiers. Both before and after Mukden, I more than once heard the men themselves—particularly those in hospital—say that they could not return home till the enemy had been defeated. “The women will laugh at us,” were their words. Another important factor, and one which the Russian especially values, is constant and affectionate care for his bodily needs and his health. For anyone who has not been on active service it is difficult to appreciate how troops who have been disorganized and badly shaken by hard

fighting can regain heart if they suddenly find hot food ready for them. A night's rest, a full stomach, ammunition replenished, a quiet calling of the roll, and the calm demeanour of their officers—all assisted to make our splendid soldiers once more ready for the fray. As regards the army's *moral* generally, I should mention that the nearer our men were to the enemy, the better were their spirits and the fewer the carp-ing comments and criticisms which always do so much harm; there was no time to read the papers. When I visited the advanced units of the 1st Army (those of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Siberians, and of the 1st Army Corps commanded by Colonels Prince Trubetski, Tikhomiroff, Red-kin, and General Kashtalinski), I found universal keenness to advance. The men were well looked after, discipline was strict, and the attitude of both men and officers was one of quiet and steady determination. But in proportion as the distance from the advanced lines increased, and direct touch with the enemy was lost, there was time for talk and gossip. It was on the lines of communication (particularly at Harbin) that drunken-ness and gambling took place, besides other forms of dissipation that disgraced the army. It was here that the white-livered brigade collected, leaving the front under any excuse even when fighting was in progress, and, indeed, what else could be expected of them? It is much to be

regretted that some of our pressmen judged the army by what they saw at Harbin, and that we were judged by this standard even in Russia. Many officers and others in authority who had failed to pass the "ordeal by fire" lived on in Russia, and from them a correct opinion as to the self-sacrifice and devotion of the army and its readiness to continue the war could hardly have been expected. Unfortunately for us, also there happened to be on the Committee of Imperial Defence two general officers who had been at the front. One had left it; the other had been deprived of his command of an army corps. Clearly, such men as these could not have much assisted this new and important body to insist on the necessity of continuing the struggle.

A step taken by me to raise and to maintain the spirit of the army was the rapid promotion of those officers who had most distinguished themselves in the field. We obtained a number of our best senior regimental officers by promoting captains, and, what is more important, we appointed many distinguished officers to the command of regiments without regard to their lack of seniority, or to the fact that some of them were only lieutenant-colonels. In a very short time these commanding officers improved their regiments almost beyond recognition, and fully proved how important a careful selection is in war. By promoting to Major-General those

colonels who had most distinguished themselves on service, we began to get at the head of brigades leaders who were worthy of every confidence, and offered a splendid selection from which to choose divisional and corps commanders.

A further step which I took to woo victory was to enforce the humane treatment of the Chinese population of Manchuria. I, and those immediately under me, insisted on their being protected (as far as war conditions permitted) from unnecessary hardships, and on their property being guarded, and I made a point of their being promptly paid in cash for everything they brought in. This assisted us considerably in getting supplies, and, notwithstanding the great hardships we ourselves occasionally suffered, I invariably insisted on these relations being maintained. Consequently, not once was I forced to have recourse to requisitioning supplies or transport, nor had I to use force to get local labour. The results surpassed all my expectations, for, in spite of the great efforts made by the enemy to raise the Chinese population against us, and in spite of the unfriendly feeling towards us of many of the Chinese authorities themselves, the mass of the people appreciated our attitude, remained quiet, and, by freely bringing in their products, saved us from hunger. Although they might have easily kept us in a perpetual state of alarm by killing isolated

officials, attacking small detachments, destroying the telegraphs and the roads, they—with very few exceptions—lived on peacefully in the theatre of war, in some instances even joining with us in fighting the Hun-huses.

Thus, besides the plan of campaign for carrying on the war—in which the possibility of retiring even behind Harbin was foreseen—the principal means taken by me to secure victory were :

1. To instil in all ranks a firm belief that the war could only be brought to a close with victory, and that till victory had crowned our efforts not one of us would return home.
2. To foster a constant fatherly endeavour on the part of all in authority to attend, as far as the exigencies of the Service permitted, to the comfort and preserve the health of the troops.
3. To assist in all ways the readiness and preparation of the troops, particularly by accelerating, irrespective of mere seniority, the promotion of the most distinguished of the officers.
4. To maintain a uniformly humane attitude towards the Chinese population of Manchuria.

III.

The enemy's army began to weaken in the moral as well as the material sense.

To drive back our army northwards to Hsing-kai called for immense efforts and many

sacrifices on the part of the Japanese. I have stated (in Chapter VII.) that our Headquarter Staff estimated the total peace establishment of their army at 110,000 men [of which 13,000 were always absent on furlough and leave], and the reserve and territorial forces at only 315,000, so that the total number available for service was, as we thought, not more than 425,000. But, according to the figures of the Japanese army medical authorities, more than 1,000,000 men were called up to the colours, which must have demanded a great effort on the part of the nation. It was found necessary also, during the war, to alter the existing laws so as to catch those men who had already completed their time in the reserve for a further period of service in the regular army, and to draft into the ranks in 1904 and 1905 the recruit contingent of 1906 as well as that of 1905. (Towards the end we began to find old men and boys amongst our prisoners.) Their casualties were very high; in the Cemetery of Honour in Tokio alone 60,600 men killed in battle were buried, and to these must be added more than 50,000 who died of wounds. Thus it appears from these two sources alone that they lost 110,000—a figure equal to the whole peace establishment of the army. Taking into account our standing peace army of 1,000,000 men, our losses were comparatively far lighter than those of the Japanese.

In all some 554,000 men passed through their hospitals during the war, of whom 220,000* were wound cases. Altogether they lost 135,000 men killed and died of wounds and sickness. Their losses in officers were particularly heavy, and the men fought with such stubborn bravery that whole regiments, and even brigades, were on certain occasions almost wiped out of existence. This happened, for instance, in the fight for Putiloff Hill,† on October 15; also during the February fighting for the position held by the 3rd Siberians on the Kiao-tu Ling [Pass]; in the battle of March 7, at Tu-hung-tun‡ and other points. At Liao-yang and Mukden the majority of the enemy's troops suffered very heavily in their frontal attack of our positions, and failed to take them. The fate of these battles was decided by turning movements. In the fighting on the Sha Ho they tried hard to force us back towards Mukden, and many of their units were again and again driven off our positions, and only occupied them after we had abandoned them of our own accord. The spirit of these Japanese troops who had thus seen no success attend their individual efforts could not but be shaken. Again, the ever-increasing determination displayed by our men must have affected their spirit. Their regulars had been placed

* [Sic. Killed and wounded (see p. 207, Vol I.).—Ed.]

† [At the Sha Ho.—Ed.] ‡ [At Mukden.—Ed.]

hors de combat in considerable numbers, and however quickly the recruits might be called up and trained, it was not to be expected that they would be able to develop the same stubbornness in defence, and the same dash in attack, that their comrades had possessed in the first campaign. This was noticeable in the fighting in front of Mukden, but especially near Hsing-kai. While our scouting parties, and the troops of the advanced posts, were pressing the enemy more and more boldly, we began to notice a comparative lack of enterprise on their part, coupled with a want of their former daring, and even their watchfulness. Perhaps the strain of war was beginning to tell on the Southern temperament. Indeed, for six whole months they gave us time to strengthen ourselves and fortify, without once attempting to attack and press us back on the Sungari, and so inflict a crushing defeat. While we remained at Hsing-kai the number of prisoners taken by us began to increase, and they ceased to display the fanaticism shown by those captured in 1904. Many openly acknowledged that they were weary of the war, and from the nature of numerous letters from Japan found on the killed and prisoners, it was evident that this weariness was general. These letters also told of the heavy increase in taxation during the war, of the increased cost of the necessities of life, and

of the dearth of employment. Once an entire company surrendered in front of the positions held by the 1st Siberians, a thing that had never happened before. Nor were the enemy well situated as regards material. Money became more and more scarce, while the requirements of the growing army increased. Particular difficulty was found in quickly replenishing artillery ammunition. This was very noticeable on the Sha Ho.

But what must have been the most serious source of anxiety to Japan was the indifference which Europe and America were beginning to show to her successes. At first it had seemed profitable to Great Britain and Germany that Russia and Japan should be drawn into war, for when they were exhausted the hands of both would be tied—ours in Europe, and Japan's in Asia. Nevertheless, it was not to the interest of Europe generally to allow the triumph of the Japanese in the battlefields of Manchuria to become absolute. A victorious Japan might join with China, and raise the standard of "Asia for the Asiatics." The extinction of all European and American enterprises in Asia would be the first object of this new great Power, and the expulsion of Europeans from Asia would be the end. There is already little enough room on the Continent of Europe. Without the markets of the wide world she could not exist, and the

cries of "America for the Americans," "Asia for the Asiatics," "Africa for the Africans," are of serious import for her. But the danger is approaching, and is so imminent that the Powers of Europe will be forced to sink their differences and unite in order to withstand the attempt of the young nations* to drive old Europe home into the narrow shell which she has long since outgrown. We might have taken advantage of this change in international feeling, and have tried to close the money markets of the world to Japan. Only one decisive victory on our part was wanted to bring about a very serious reaction both in Japan and in the army in the field. If we had exhausted her financial resources, and had continued the war, we might soon have compelled her to seek an honourable peace, which would have been advantageous to us.

At Mukden we fought with a shortage in establishment of 300,000 men; we began the war with inconsiderable forces; we conducted it under the most unfavourable conditions, and without the support of the country; we were, moreover, weakened by disturbances in the interior, and were connected with Russia only by a single-track weak line. In these impossible conditions we put 300,000 of the enemy *hors de*

* [Possibly the author refers to China, Japan, and India being young in a national sense.—ED.]

combat, and had 600,000 rifles ready at Hsing-kai at a time when they were beginning to flag. If we attained such results, can it be said that our army accomplished but little? Is it fair to continue applying the epithet "Disgraceful" to the war? It cannot be denied that both the troops and their leaders did less in the time at their disposal than they might have done if properly supported by the country; but by the summer of 1905 conditions had begun to change in our favour. The conquered are always judged severely, and the leaders should naturally be the first to bear the responsibility for disaster to the troops under them. We can only be judged as acquitted because of our readiness to continue the struggle—a readiness which was created, and grew stronger in the army in spite of disaster. We believed in the possibility and certainty of victory, and if it had not been for the serious internal disturbances in Russia, we should have undoubtedly been able to prove the truth of our belief in battle.

Even the inhabitants of Moscow, where, in all the difficult times the nation has passed through, a manly and determined voice has always been raised in support of the honour and dignity of Russia, showed that their spirits had on this occasion fallen. It was with amazement and sorrow that we read of a certain action of the Moscow Town Council on June 7, 1905. The

news had immense effect on the army, and on hearing of it I sent the following letter* to Prince Trubetski, the President of the Moscow nobility :

“ An overwhelming impression has been produced throughout the army by the news which has reached us from home that many poor-spirited people are trying to bring about an early peace. It is forgotten that a peace made before victory has been won cannot be honourable, and will not therefore be permanent. Never has our army been so strong and so ready for serious battle as now. Victory is nearer than seems likely to those at a distance. The troops have great belief in the new Commander-in-Chief;† they are assured of everything necessary to their wants, and their health is excellent. We would welcome news of the enemy’s advance, and are ready to move against them, when ordered to, with full faith in our strength. The troops have become war-seasoned. Even those units which were for various reasons not as steady as they should have been in the early fights are now thoroughly reliable. Numbers of wounded officers and men are hastening to rejoin, though not completely convalescent. Though we have lost the fleet, the army remains to us, and, I repeat, it is more powerful than it ever was before. Our position is altogether stronger and, tactically, better placed than those we held at Liao-yang or Mukden, for the Japanese do not envelop us in the same way. Though their forces have also been growing in numbers, there are many indications that their strength is on the wane: their ranks are being

* [? Telegram.—Ed.] † [General Linievitch.—Ed.]

filled with men who formerly would not have been accepted, and the whole spirit of the army has undergone a change. More men allow themselves to be taken prisoners than before ; their artillery and cavalry are weaker than ours, and they are short of gun ammunition. Letters from Japan, which we have found on the men, show that a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the war is growing among the people, for prices have gone up, and they are enduring great privations. These are the conditions under which I to-day read in letters from Moscow that on June 7 the Town Council discussed the advisability of inviting the representatives of the people to consider the question of putting an end to the war. Last February, on my departure for the front, you, in the name of all the representatives of Moscow, bade me farewell with words full of courage and of faith in the might of Russia. I therefore consider it my duty to send this letter to you. If the Muscovites do not feel as able as before to send their worthiest sons to us to help us overcome the foe, let them at least not prevent us from doing our duty in Manchuria.

“Although there is nothing of a secret nature in this letter, its publication in the Press over my signature is very undesirable.”

In reply, Prince Trubetski wrote to me on June 14 as follows :

“I have handed over your telegram, which greatly touched me, to the Mayor and Zemstvo ; I will communicate its contents to as many as I can, and I will do everything that is possible to get action taken on it. If it may be considered necessary by the Tsar to end the war, I do not

think it should be discussed beforehand in committees. May God help you! My whole heart is with you."

But the efforts of individuals were powerless to check the march of events. The serious state of Russia's internal affairs and the hostile—to put the best construction on it—indifference of the people resulted in peace being prematurely concluded. The consequences of making such a peace, by which Japan was recognized as Russia's conqueror in Asia, will have serious results not only for us, but for all the Powers who have possessions or interests on that continent. The "Yellow peril," the appearance of which has only recently been foreseen, is now a reality. Notwithstanding her victorious issue from the war, Japan is hurriedly increasing her forces, while China is forming a large army under the guidance of Japanese officers and on the Japanese model. In a very short space of time she and Japan will be able to pour an army of more than 1,500,000 into Manchuria, which, if directed against us, could proceed to take a great deal of Siberia from Russia, and reduce her to a second-rate Power.

We have seen above how the absence of any previous diplomatic arrangements forced us to keep the greater part of our armed forces in European Russia during the war, which fact constituted one of the reasons of our reverses

(the Guards and Grenadiers Corps remained in Russia, while the reserve troops fought in Manchuria). We have one consolation in that we now know that our Western neighbours are not pursuing any policy of aggression against us, for they had an excellent opportunity in the years 1905 and 1906* to alter the existing frontier had they wished to do so. We may hope, therefore, to be able to come to some understanding with the Powers of Europe by which, should we be again attacked in the Far East, we shall be able to throw the whole of our armed forces into a struggle with either Japan or Japan and China combined. Another reason for our failure is the fact that we were unable rapidly to make full use of such forces as were available, because of the weakness of railway communication between Russia and Manchuria. It is clear that, as matters now stand in the Far East, the laying of a second track over the Siberian line and the construction of a railway along the bank of the Amur are so vital for us that no time should be lost in doing these things. The mere construction of a line along the Amur can help us but little, while a double-track line, even with forty-eight trains in the twenty-four hours, cannot, of course, satisfy all the requirements of the great army we should have to put in the field in the event of a fresh war. In future we shall only be able to rely to

* [? 1904 and 1905 also.—ED.]

a small extent upon the vast supplies of food in Manchuria, and shall be obliged to convey the greater portion not only of our munitions of war, but of our food-supplies, from European Russia and Siberia. It will therefore be necessary to make use of our water communications, for the failure of the attempt to transport supplies in 1905 by the Arctic Ocean and the River Yenissei cannot be considered final. Particular assistance also could be afforded to the army by increasing the population of Siberia, and so at the same time augmenting the local resources necessary for an army. The rich reserves of metals, coals, and timber in that part will assist us in bringing nearer to the Far East not only our food-supply base, but also our war base (for ordnance, ammunition, explosives, etc.).

Among the main reasons for our disasters must be mentioned the indifferent, even hostile attitude of the people to the late war; but the menace to our nation from the Far East is now so clear that all grades of society ought to prepare—in case of a fresh attack on Russia by Japan or China—to rise like one man to defend the integrity and the greatness of our Fatherland.

Thus, to attain success in any such future war, which is by no means an improbable contingency, we should strive—

1. To be in a position to make use of all our troops;

2. To have thorough railway communication between the Pri-Amur and Russia ;
3. To prepare the waterways of Siberia for the carriage of heavy goods in bulk from west to east ;
4. To move the army's base as far as possible from Russia into Siberia ; and, what is most important—
5. To make ready to carry on a new war not only with the army, but with the whole of a patriotic nation.

History had apparently destined Russia to undergo a bitter trial from 1904 to 1906, both on the field of battle and at home. Our great nation has issued renewed and strengthened from still heavier trials, and let us not doubt now but that Russia, summoned by the Tsar to a new life, will quickly recover from the temporary blows which she has sustained, and will not fall from her high place among the other nations of the world. As regards the army, its bitter experiences should not on this occasion fail to bear fruit, and the most detailed, thorough, and fearless study of all its defects can only bring about a renewal and increase of strength. We must remember one point—and it is the main point: our officers and many of the men conducted themselves most unselfishly in most difficult circumstances. Given this, all our other faults can be comparatively quickly mended ; but before all else,

we must not be afraid of openly acknowledging them.

Strength lies—in the truth.

In this important work of rejuvenation which is now beginning in Russia for the good of the people and the army, we must remember the great words of the Tsar to the Army and Fleet almost two years ago :

“Russia is mighty. During the thousand years of her existence there have been years of still greater suffering—years when greater danger menaced. Yet she has every time issued from the struggle with fresh glory, with added might.

“Though we may be sore at heart on account of the disasters and losses that have befallen us, do not let us be discouraged. By them Russia’s strength is renewed and her power increased.

“A. N. KUROPATKIN, GENERAL.

“SHESHURINO,*

“November 30, 1906.”

* [The name of General Kuropatkin’s country estate in the province of Pskoff.—ED.]

CHAPTER XIII

INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION TO VOLUME III.*

WHEN war seemed likely, the following scheme for the strategical distribution of the troops in the Far East in the event of hostilities was agreed to by the Viceroy, Alexeieff:

1. The major portion of the troops, consisting of 60 infantry battalions, 65 squadrons, 2 sapper battalions, and 160 guns (total, 65,000 rifles and sabres), were to be sent into Southern Manchuria. The main body was to be concentrated in the area Hai-cheng-Liao-yang, and the advance guard† moved forward to the Ya-lu.

2. The garrison of Port Arthur was to consist of the 7th East Siberian Rifle Division (12 battalions), 2 battalions of fortress artillery, and 1 company of sappers. The 5th East Siberian

* [This chapter is composed of the introduction and conclusion to Volume III. of the original, which have been translated, as they add some light on points not touched upon in Volume IV.—ED.]

† Eighteen infantry battalions, 25 squadrons, 86 guns; total, 19,000 rifles and sabres.

Rifle Regiment, consisting of 4 battalions with 6 guns, was also detailed for the defence of the Kuan-tung district, to augment the strength of the garrison if necessary.

3. The garrison of Vladivostok was to consist of the 8th East Siberian Rifle Division (8 battalions of infantry), with 2 battalions of fortress artillery, 2 sapper companies, and 1 mining company.

4. That of Nikolaevsk was to be 1 fortress infantry battalion, 1 fortress artillery company, and 1 mining company.

This scheme, by which the force detailed for the defence of Port Arthur and the whole Kuan-tung Peninsula was limited to sixteen battalions, was due to our exaggerated idea of the strength and invincibility of our Pacific Ocean Fleet. According to the Viceroy, it was founded on the following opinion, expressed by Admiral Witgeft, Chief of Alexeieff's temporary naval staff:

“According to the present relative strengths of the two fleets, the possibility of ours being defeated is a contingency that need not be considered, and until it has been destroyed it is inconceivable that the Japanese can land at New-chuang or any other spot on the Gulf of Korea.”

But such an attenuation of our force in this quarter was contrary to the opinion of a committee—attended by me in my capacity of War Minister—which sat in Port Arthur in June, 1903. The Viceroy and senior commanders of



FIELD-MARSHAL MARQUIS IWAO OYAMA.

the garrison were present at the meeting when it was resolved and recorded as "essential" that the 3rd Siberian Corps should be formed for the defence of Kuan-tung, in addition to the 7th East Siberian Rifle Division, its permanent garrison, and that this corps should be composed of the 3rd and 4th East Siberian Rifle Divisions, each of twelve battalions. In fact, it was considered necessary to have thirty-six battalions of infantry, exclusive of reserve battalions, for the defence of Port Arthur and the Peninsula. This formation of a special army corps for Kuan-tung was thought to be necessitated by the existence so close to Port Arthur of Dalny, a magnificently equipped port, connected by railway to the fortress, and a most convenient base for operations against it.

Feeling that the force allotted to the defence of the Peninsula was inadequate, on February 11 I telegraphed as War Minister to Alexeieff that I considered it imperative that the 9th East Siberian Rifle Division—then under formation—should be sent there in place of the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division, ordered to the Ya-lu. The Viceroy did not concur in this view, but he temporarily retained the 13th and 14th East Siberian Rifle Regiments.

On February 20, 1904, I was appointed to the command of the Manchurian Army. In my first communication to the Viceroy (No. 1 of February 24) I again expressed the opinion

that, in view of the possibility of it being besieged by four or five Japanese divisions, our first efforts should be directed to strengthening Port Arthur. And I further stated :

“ If Port Arthur is weakly garrisoned, and should be besieged, I might be tempted by that fact to assume the offensive before there has been sufficient time to concentrate our forces. It is for this reason that I have already advised the concentration of the 9th Division in Kuan-tung to replace the 3rd.”

However, the Viceroy again disagreed with me, and wrote in a despatch of March 1:

“ Separate operations against the fortress would only be really worth undertaking if the enemy could make certain of seizing it by a *coup de main*, and the moment for this has passed. The land front is becoming more formidable every day, and, though not complete, the works are now well advanced ; 200 additional guns have been mounted in Port Arthur itself, and more than forty at Chin-chou ; the strength of the garrison is being brought up by the reservists arriving from Trans-Baikalia, and the stocks of supplies are being increased. All the bays nearest the fortress, as well as the port of Dalny, have been mined, and for the rest—the oft-proved stubbornness of the Russian soldier in defence can be relied on.”

He had already reported to the Tsar that—

“ Although separate operations against Port Arthur would threaten the fortress itself with all the hardships of a siege or blockade, they would

be rather advantageous to our arms as a whole, for they would entail a division of the enemy's forces."

As regards my own recommendations upon the plan of operations to be followed against Japan, I drew up two memoranda, which I submitted to the Tsar on February 15 and March 4. In the former I stated :

"In the first phase of the campaign our main object should be to prevent the destruction of our forces in detail. The apparent importance of any single locality or position (fortresses excepted) should not lead us into the great error of holding it in insufficient force, which would bring about the very result we are so anxious to prevent. While gradually growing in numbers and preparing to take the offensive, we should only move forward when sufficiently strong, and when supplied with everything necessary for an uninterrupted advance lasting over a fairly long period."

Against this the Tsar was pleased to note in his own handwriting the words "Quite so."

I left St. Petersburg on March 12, and arrived at Liao-yang on the 28th. On this date there were collected in the concentration area in Southern Manchuria 59 battalions,* 39 squadrons and *sotnias*, and 140 guns. The distribution was as follows :

The Southern Force (under General Sakharoff)

* Two of them sapper battalions. The third battalions formed in Russia for all the East Siberian Rifle Regiments were only then beginning to arrive.

of the 1st and 9th East Siberian Rifle Divisions—20 battalions, 6 squadrons, and 54 guns—was in the area Hai-cheng-Ta-shih-chiao-Newchuang-Kai-ping.

The *Eastern (Advance) Force* (under General Kashtalinski) of the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division—8 battalions, 24 guns, 8 mountain and 8 machine-guns—was moved to the Ya-lu.

The *Mounted Force* (under General Mischenko) of 18 squadrons and 6 guns was operating in Northern Korea.

The *Main Body* was divided into two groups:

At An-shan-chan: 5th East Siberian Rifle Division of 8 battalions and 24 guns.

At Liao-yang: 2nd Brigades of the 31st and 35th Infantry Divisions, 22nd and 24th East Siberian Rifle Regiments—21 battalions, 10 squadrons, and 24 guns.

In addition to these, the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment—3 battalions and 4 guns—was allotted to the protection of the Viceroy's Headquarters.

In *Port Arthur* were the 7th East Siberian Rifle Division—12 battalions, 2 reserve battalions, $3\frac{1}{2}$ battalions of fortress artillery, and a sapper and mining company.

In *Kuan-tung* were the 5th, 13th, 14th, and 15th East Siberian Rifle Regiments, 1 battalion

of the 16th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, 2 battalions of the 18th East Siberian Rifle Regiment, and 1 reserve battalion—12 battalions, 20 guns, and 1 *sotnia* of Cossacks.

On my arrival I approved the following scheme of engineering works: The fortification of the positions on the Fen-shui Ling (Passes), and at Liao-yang, Mukden, and Tieh-ling; the construction of roads across the passes to the Ya-lu, and of three parallel roads from Kai-ping to Mukden; the construction of crossings over the Liao River, and the hutting of three army corps. I at once took steps also to strengthen our advance guard on the Ya-lu, which was some 133 miles distant. Two regiments of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division were sent there, in addition to the third battalions for the regiments of the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division. By the time, therefore, that the enemy began crossing the Ya-lu, the Eastern (Advance) Force had been increased to eighteen battalions, besides which the 21st East Siberian Rifle Regiment had been moved towards Ta-shih-chiao. The advance guard was under General Zasulitch. Meanwhile the units of the 1st Siberian Division were detained by Alexeieff in Harbin, so that, from the middle of March to the middle of April, the Manchurian Army did not receive a single battalion from the rear.

Notwithstanding the orders Zasulitch had received to avoid a decisive engagement with

the enemy, who had the superiority in numbers, on May 1 part of his force became hotly engaged in what developed into a serious fight at the Ya-lu, and after a disastrous finish his eastern force was withdrawn to the passes of the greater Fen-shui-ling range, which they reached on May 7. In this action only nine of our eighteen battalions took any active part, those of the 11th and 12th East Siberian Rifle Regiments showing great gallantry and determination. When asked why he had disobeyed the orders repeatedly given to him not to become entangled in a serious engagement, but to fall back on Feng-huang-cheng, Zasulitch gave as his reason that he had hoped to defeat the enemy. On May 5 the Japanese began debarking at Pi-tzu-wo, and a small force of all arms under General Zikoff was detached from the southern force in order to reconnoitre and ascertain the importance of this landing. The advance of this column incidentally enabled us to repair temporarily the portion of the line which the enemy had destroyed, and so to run a train-load of mélinite shells, machine-guns, and ammunition through to Port Arthur. The Emperor was fully alive to the danger of the situation caused by the dispersion of the Manchurian Army, and on May 11 telegraphed his orders for an immediate concentration. This was completed by the 14th, and the force was grouped on two points—

Hai-cheng and Liao-yang. The former group consisted of twenty-seven battalions, twelve squadrons and *sotnias*, and eighty guns; the latter of twenty-eight battalions, six *sotnias*, and eighty-eight guns. The passes over the Fen-shui-ling range were guarded by small columns of infantry with guns, and advance and flank guards were thrown out. The independent cavalry, operating on our flanks east of the passes, was divided in two bodies, under Mischenko and Rennenkampf. West of Liao-yang was a small force under General Kossagovski, while five and a half battalions of the 1st Siberian Division lay at Mukden. At this time also, when the Viceroy returned to Port Arthur (after Admiral Makharoff's death of April 13), the weakness of the place began to be shown up, and Alexeieff's apprehensions as to its safety became acute. In a despatch of May 16 he questioned whether the place "would be able to hold out for more than two or three months, in spite of all the steps taken to strengthen its defences." On April 25 the Chief of the Viceroy's Staff telegraphed to me that, owing to the inadequacy of the garrison, Alexeieff considered it essential that if the fortress were attacked, the field army should support it as energetically and rapidly as possible. Alexeieff was not singular in his pessimistic views, for Stössel also gave up hope of a successful defence

of Port Arthur directly after he had so unnecessarily abandoned the Chin-chou position on May 27. On the 28th I received a telegram from him urging me to support him speedily and in strength. This opinion was again endorsed by Alexeieff, who telegraphed on June 5 that "Port Arthur cannot strictly be called a storm-proof fortress, and it is a question whether it can even stand a siege of the length indicated in my telegram of May 16."

The result of this *volte-face* on the part of Alexeieff as to the powers of resistance of the place was that he pressed me to send part of the army at once to assist it, though we were by no means ready for such an enterprise. On May 21 he wrote that he considered the moment in every way favourable for the army to assume the offensive in one of two directions—either towards the Ya-lu, with the object of defeating and throwing Kuroki back across the river, detaching a force to contain him there, and then moving on to relieve Port Arthur, or else direct on that place.

It should be borne in mind that these instructions were given at a time when the position of only two of the hostile armies had been fixed. Of these, one—of three divisions and three reserve brigades—had forced the crossing of the Ya-lu, and the other—of three divisions—had landed near Pi-tzu-wo. Moreover, a landing,

of the extent of which we had no information, was then being carried out at Ta-ku-shan. Consequently we did not know the destination of one-half of the enemy's army, and were thus not in possession of two important pieces of knowledge which were necessary before any operations of a decisive character could be undertaken—namely, the position of the enemy's main forces and their probable plan of operations. It was incumbent on us, therefore, to exercise great caution, and to keep our forces as far as possible concentrated, so as to be ready to meet the attack of two or even three armies. Concerning the two directions in which the Viceroy advocated an advance, the following few points suggest themselves. For any operations towards the Ya-lu—bearing in mind the necessity for guarding our flank and rear against one hostile force landing at Pi-tzu-wo, and possibly others landing near Kai-ping or Newchuang—not more than sixty to seventy battalions were available of the ninety-four which in the middle of May constituted the army ; the whole of the food for these troops had to be brought up by rail, owing to the exhaustion of the local resources—never very plentiful—in the hilly country between Liao-yang and Feng-huang-cheng : we had not got the transport to do this, for our ten transport trains could only have carried a three or four days' supply for a force of this size ; the usual

May and June rains would have made the movement of our guns and baggage at first difficult, and then impossible, and we had at that time no mountain artillery or pack transport; we were by no means well placed in the matter of artillery parks: the horses for those of the 5th, 6th, and 9th East Siberian Rifle Artillery Divisions were still *en route* to Harbin, while the 1st and 2nd Siberian Divisions had arrived without any. Finally, if Kuroki should fall back behind the Ya-lu without accepting battle, we should have been obliged to retire and leave at least an army corps to contain him. When the rainy season came on, this corps itself would have been obliged to withdraw, as with interrupted communications it would have been seriously threatened by Kuroki's far larger force, well provided with both mountain artillery and pack transport. For these reasons an offensive towards the Ya-lu was impracticable.

Under the conditions laid down by the Viceroy as to keeping screens on the Feng-shui Ling (Passes), and leaving a reserve at Hai-cheng* until such time as fresh reinforcements had been received, a direct advance on Port Arthur could only be made with one corps of twenty-four battalions. In view of the possibility of Kuroki

* The Viceroy's letter (No. 2,960) of June 6 called attention to the necessity of "bearing in mind measures to guard against the event of an advance by Kuroki."

taking the offensive in superior force (after reinforcement by the troops already beginning to land at Ta-ku-shan) against our cordon, which extended along the Fen-shui-ling range for more than sixty-six miles, and in view of the possibility of the Japanese cutting off any detachment moving on Port Arthur by landing somewhere in its rear, the despatch of this corps 130 miles to the south could not but be considered a most risky and difficult operation.

As our numerical weakness absolutely precluded a general assumption of the offensive on our part, I pointed out that by such a movement for the relief of Port Arthur we risked disorganizing the whole army. I also drew attention to the fact that, according to the report of Captain Gurko, who had just arrived from the fortress, its combatant strength amounted to at least 45,000 men (including sailors), and that the enemy could not therefore have any very overwhelming superiority. My views upon the inexpediency of any movement towards Port Arthur were communicated to the War Minister in my telegrams (Nos. 692 and 701) of May 28 and 30. But in a telegram of the 31st the Viceroy urgently requested me to advance to the relief of the fortress, and expressed the wish that four divisions should be detailed for the operation; while on June 6 he quoted to me a message from St. Petersburg

in which it was stated that the time was "ripe for the Manchurian Army to assume the offensive."

At the end of May the first reinforcements—the 3rd Siberian Division—began to arrive in the concentration area. This enabled me to increase the force detailed for the advance into Kuan-tung up to 32 battalions,* 22 squadrons and *sotnias*, and 100 guns. As a reserve to this force, the 2nd Brigade of the 31st Division was placed in the area Kai-ping—Hsiung-yao-cheng, and to a brigade of the 3rd Siberians was allotted the duty of watching the coast from Newchuang to the latter place. To hold Kuroki and the troops under Nodzu that had landed at Ta-ku-shan in check, 40 battalions, 52 *sotnias*, and 94 guns were left on the Fen-shui Ling (Passes), distributed over a length of more than sixty-six miles. The general reserve consisted of the 5th East Siberian Rifle Division at Liao-yang, and a brigade of the 3rd Siberian Division at Hai-cheng. Early in June the force detailed under General Shtakelberg for the operations towards Port Arthur began to concentrate at Te-li-ssu, with its advance guard at Wa-fang-tien. On the 13th the Japanese themselves began to advance from Pu-lan-tien, and by the evening of that day we had been able to rail two regiments of the 9th East Siberian Rifle Division into

* 1st and 9th East Siberian Rifle Divisions, and 2nd Brigade of the 35th Division.

Te-li-ssu. On the 14th the enemy's attack of our position there was repulsed, and on the following day Shtakelberg proposed to make a counter attack, having been reinforced at noon by the Tobolsk Regiment. However, the battle ended in our defeat, and we were forced to fall back. General Gerngross, who was in command of the 1st East Siberian Rifle Division, was wounded, but remained in action. Shtakelberg's orders gave him freedom of action, but he was instructed not to accept decisive battle if the enemy were in superior numbers. Simultaneously with the enemy's advance from the south, Kuroki moved forward on the 14th to the Ta Ling* (Pass) from Hsiu-yen, where three (according to some reports four) Japanese divisions were concentrated. Their 12th Division and three reserve brigades were left to watch our eastern force, and a further movement on Kai-ping, Ta-shih-chiao, or Hai-cheng was quite likely.

In order to be in a position to check the combined advance of the two Japanese groups, I thought it advisable to strengthen our southern force, and therefore so rearranged our dispositions that 87 out of 110 battalions were massed on the southern front, in the area Kai-ping-Hai-cheng, against Oku and Nogi. Fortunately for us, the critical position of our eastern front during the operations at Te-li-ssu was not appreciated by

* [There are several passes of this name.—Ed.]

Kuroki, which fact favoured Count Keller's demonstration towards Feng-huang-cheng in the middle of June. Otherwise Kuroki might have seized Liao-yang. On the 25th the enemy's advance against our eastern force was commenced. On the 27th Keller withdrew some of his troops from the Fen-shui Ling (Passes) without opposition, and by July 1 the main body was concentrated seven miles east of Lang-tzu-shan and twenty-seven from Liao-yang. On June 27, without any serious engagement, but under pressure from the enemy, we abandoned the Fen-shui Ling (Passes), which they at once occupied. A few days previously—on June 23—about a division of the enemy had been located by Rennenkampf to the east of Sai-ma-chi. Believing that Hai-cheng constituted our greatest danger, as the enemy might, if they gained a success there, cut off Shtakelberg's force close by, on the 29th I concentrated forty-one battalions and eighteen *sotnias* under Zasulitch at Hsi-mu-cheng, intending with them to hurl back the enemy on to their Hai-cheng line of advance. However, on the same day we discovered that those of the enemy who had moved at first from the Ta Ling (Pass) along the Hsi-mu-cheng road had again retired to it.

This danger being temporarily averted, I ordered the 31st Infantry Division back to Hai-cheng. As the defence of Liao-yang from

the east was the next most urgent matter, a brigade of the 9th Division, which had just arrived from Russia, was moved to Lang-tzu-shan to act as a reserve to the eastern force, which had been previously augmented by the return to it of two regiments of the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division. The other brigade was sent, under General Hershelman, who commanded the division, to Hsi-kei-an village [at the junction of the Liao-yang and Mukden roads], so as to cover the left flank of the eastern force and guard the road to Mukden. Taking into consideration the considerable increase of the eastern force, I ordered Count Keller to take the offensive, so as again to get possession of the passes. He did so, but although he had forty battalions under his command, he advanced with only twenty-four. Though our troops were successful in the early hours of July 17, thanks to the gallant conduct of the 24th East Siberian Rifles under Colonel Lechitski, the result of the day's action was not favourable. Keller stopped the advance before even bringing into action his strong reserves, with the result that at nightfall the eastern force was once more on its former positions on the Yang-tzu Ling (Pass). On the 19th the brigade of the 9th Division was driven from its position at Chiao-tou, and fell back towards Hu-chia-tzu.*

* [This action is apparently what is elsewhere known as that of Chiao-tou.—ED.]

By the middle of July the disposition of the enemy's forces was approximately as follows : Kuroki, with three field divisions and reserves, had captured the three Fen-shui Ling and Mo-Tien Ling (Passes), and, with his outposts thrown out on the roads to Liao-yang, had reached the valley of the Tang Ho, a tributary of the Tai-tzu Ho. Nodzu, with an army of approximately the same strength, had captured the passes on the Kai-ping, Ta-shih-chiao, and Hai-cheng roads, and had two divisions and a brigade in reserve on the Hai-cheng line of advance and one on the Ta-shih-chiao line. Oku, having moved up from Kuan-tung with his army of some four divisions, had driven back our outposts and occupied Kai-ping. Two brigades were left in reserve on the line Feng-huang-cheng-Kuan-tien-chang. Thus, according to our information, two armies of about 90 to 100 battalions had advanced against us from the east, and one of about 50 to 60 battalions from the south, whilst Nogi's army of 3 divisions and 2 reserve brigades had been left to operate against Port Arthur. Our dispositions were briefly : 44 battalions against Kuroki's army ; 28 battalions on the line Fen-shui-ling-Hai-cheng against 2 divisions and 1 reserve brigade of Nodzu's army ; 48 battalions against Oku's army, and 1 division of Nodzu's ; 16 battalions were in the general reserve at Hai-cheng, and

four in garrison at Liao-yang. It must, however, be borne in mind that the effective strength of our battalions was very far short of the prescribed establishment.* From the beginning of the war up to July only 3,600 men were received in the way of drafts.

With the above dispositions of the opposing forces, we should, according to the theory of the art of war, have been able to operate on "interior lines." But for us this was extremely difficult, as, in the first place, we had not enough men to attain the necessary superiority over any one of the hostile groups without laying ourselves open to defeat by the other two; and, in the second, the rains had so seriously damaged the roads as to prevent the rapid movement (as we had heavy guns and baggage) necessary for successful action even on interior lines. Finally, as their bases (Korea, Ta-ku-shan, Pi-tzu-wo) were enveloping, it was possible for each of their groups to refuse an unequal battle, and fall back without exposing its communications. Still, notwithstanding these unfavourable conditions, it was proposed to attack Kuroki, who menaced our communications most, at the earliest favourable moment. The troops which could be employed to strike him were distributed in two directions: twenty-four battalions of the eastern force on the main road from

* [The reasons for this are given in great detail in Volume IV.—*i.e.*, Chapters I. to XII. of this book.—ED.]

Liao-yang to Lang-tzu-shan, with its outposts on the Yang-tzu-ling heights; and twenty-four battalions of the 10th Army Corps on the line Liao-yang - Sai-ma-chi, with its outposts five miles short of Chiao-tou. Twenty-four battalions of the 17th Corps were told off to remain as a reserve to these two groups at Liao-yang, while to prevent our left flank being turned, and to cover the Mukden road, the 11th Pskoff and 2nd Dagestan Regiments, which had just arrived from Russia, were ordered to Pen-hsi-hu. But on July 23, when I inspected the 10th Corps, I found that it was absolutely incapable of operating in the hills, as it had no pack-animals. In fact, those companies on outpost duty on steep or high ground had actually to remain all day without food or water. As the units of the 17th Corps were in a similar condition, it was impossible even to think of at once assuming the offensive.

Meanwhile, on the 23rd and 24th, the enemy themselves took the initiative by attacking the 1st and 4th Siberian Corps south of Ta-shih-chiao. In spite of the fact that the position held by these corps was very extended (eleven miles), and was divided in the centre by a rocky ridge, and that its left flank could have been easily turned, all the enemy's efforts were repulsed. The regiments of the 4th Siberians, who bore the heat and burden of the day, behaved splendidly, but "in

view of the great superiority of the enemy and the development of an attack from the direction of Ta-ling," Zarubaeff, who was given general instructions but allowed freedom of action, decided early on the morning of the 25th to withdraw his force towards Hai-cheng. On learning of this, I ordered General Sluchevski to make immediate preparations for offensive operations, and, if Kuroki should cross the Tai-tzu Ho and move towards Mukden, at once to advance, whether his troops were prepared for operating in the hills or not, and endeavour to strike Kuroki's communications. However painful the abandonment of the port of New-chuang was for us after our tactical success at Ta-shih-chiao—for the enemy could now make use of it as a new base—the strategical position of our army was improved. With the departure of the southern force towards Hai-cheng, our greatly extended front was diminished by twenty miles.

On July 31 the enemy advanced all along the line. As far as our southern group was concerned, their blow was directed against Zasulitch, who was holding a position west of Hsi-mu-cheng, especially against his right flank, which was driven back in spite of the devoted efforts of the Voronej and Kozloff Regiments. As any further success on their part threatened to cut off the 2nd Siberians from the main body of the southern group, I withdrew Zasulitch's force to Hai-cheng.

On the same day, the enemy's operations on the eastern front were directed against both our groups. In the action on the Yang-tzu Ling (Pass) General Count Keller was killed, and the unexpected death of this gallant commander, together with the abandonment without orders by the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment* of the position which protected his left flank, greatly influenced Kashtalinski (Keller's successor) in coming to his too hasty decision to withdraw the force to Lang-tzu-shan. At the same time the 10th Corps was taken partly by surprise,† and driven from its advanced posts towards Hu-chia-tzu. Sluchevski, learning of the retirement of the eastern force towards Lang-tzu-shan, and fearing for his right flank, then withdrew his corps to An-ping. In these operations the corps commander displayed a lack of energy, and several regiments showed great unsteadiness, especially the reservists, many of whom actually left the ranks during the progress of the fight.

The complicated nature of the situation now necessitated extreme caution on our part, lest anything should prevent our concentration in strength at Liao-yang, and there fighting a decisive battle against all three Japanese armies with some hope of success. From Liao-yang to

* This regiment did splendidly in later fights.

† The 122nd Tamboff Regiment was attacked when bivouacking.

our position on the eastern front, An-ping-Lang-tzu-shan, was twenty miles, and to Hai-cheng forty miles. In order to insure the movement of the troops on the southern front to their positions at Liao-yang in good time, it was necessary to move them from Hai-cheng to the position at An-shan-chan—fifteen miles from Liao-yang—which was fortified at the beginning of the war. The retirement began early on August 2, and on the following day the troops were concentrated on the position. In my report to the Tsar of August 4, I gave the following general reasons for withdrawing to the line An-shan-chan-Lang-tzu-shan-An-ping after the July fighting :

1. The Japanese superiority in numbers.
2. They were accustomed to hills and hot weather; they were younger, carried lighter loads, and had numerous mountain artillery and pack transport.
3. Their energetic and intelligent leadership.
4. The extraordinary patriotism and military spirit of their troops ; and
5. The lack of such a spirit on our side (caused by general ignorance of what we were fighting for).

Every moment gained at the beginning of August was of great importance to us, as the units of the 5th Siberians, which the Viceroy agreed to send to the front—instead of into the Pri-Amur district, as was proposed earlier—

should have been beginning to arrive in Liao-yang. Orders were therefore issued to fortify an advanced position half a march from Liao-yang in addition to the main position at that place, and for this time was required. Still, in spite of the obvious and immense importance of every day we gained by delaying the enemy's advance, General Bilderling, who had taken over the command of our eastern front from July 31, wrote that it was necessary to withdraw his troops immediately without fighting to Liao-yang itself, while Sluchevski urged that the army should be concentrated still further north—in the area Liao-yang-Mukden. These officers reiterated the same opinions still more forcibly early in August, when the difficulty of moving their troops towards Liao-yang became greatly increased by the heavy rains. The Viceroy, who was much perturbed about the fate of Port Arthur by the news of the unfortunate result of the naval operations on August 10, and whose fears were increased by Stössel's highly alarmist reports, was at the same time urging me (August 15) to assist the fortress and make an advance of some sort—though it were only a demonstration—towards Hai-cheng.

On August 25 the enemy again advanced, and on the 26th attacked us on the eastern front, but their onslaught on the 3rd Siberians at Lang-tzu-shan and the attempt made to turn our right

flank failed. Ivanoff (who was in command of the corps) handled his artillery most skilfully, and all units of this corps behaved well. The reserves sent up by Bilderling arrived in good time, but the enemy obtained a position on the left of the 10th Corps which enabled them to menace the retirement of this corps along the Tang Ho. In the hot fight on the 26th again several units of the 10th Corps did splendidly. At this time a strong turning movement was discovered being developed against the left flank of our An-shan-chan position ; but by delaying and inflicting heavy loss on the enemy on the Lang-tzu-shan and An-ping positions, all the corps were able to fall back on the advanced positions at Liao-yang, where the army was concentrated on August 29. At the beginning of the action there the army was short of its prescribed strength by 350 officers and 14,800 men. Excluding the men detailed for extra duty (on the communications, etc.), the average strength of our companies was only 140 to 150 rifles, and those companies that lost most heavily in the previous fights could muster less than 100.

The detailed account of the battle of Liao-yang has long ago been submitted to Headquarters. The following is a general description of it: On August 30 and 31 the enemy attacked our advanced positions with great determination, especially that of the 1st and 3rd Siberians, but

were repulsed everywhere with heavy loss. In this fight the regiments of the 1st, 9th, 3rd, 6th, and 5th East Siberian Rifle Divisions rivalled each other in steadiness and gallantry, while the dispositions made by Shtakelberg and Ivanoff were good. Our success, however, was by no means lightly gained. Our artillery expended as much as 100,000 rounds of ammunition, leaving us with only 10,000 rounds in the army reserve. Moreover, excluding eight battalions furnishing guards and holding the works of the main Liao-yang position, on September 1 only sixteen battalions were left in the general reserve. During the 31st we observed that large bodies of Kuroki's army were crossing on to the right bank of the Tai-tzu Ho. And, as the position held by the 10th Corps (against which Kuroki should have been operating in full strength) had not for two days been subjected to any such determined attacks as that held by the 1st and 3rd Siberians, there was every reason to suppose that Kuroki's main body was moving round to operate against our communications. Accordingly a decision had to be made of one of two alternatives: either—

1. To contain Kuroki with a small force and advance to the south against Oku and Nodzu; or—
2. To fall back on the main Liao-yang position, leave as few troops as possible to defend it, and then attack in force that portion of Kuroki's army which was moving round our left, and

endeavour to crush it by driving it back on the Tai-tzu Ho, which at that time of the year was unfordable except at a few points.

As regards the first, even if we were successful against Oku and Nodzu, they could always fall back on their communications if in difficulties, and so draw us away from Liao-yang, while any success by Kuroki which might lead to an attack by him on our communications would threaten us with catastrophe.* In order to collect sufficient force to move against the two armies, it would have been necessary to have contained Kuroki with only such troops as were on the right bank of the river—namely, the 17th Corps and two regiments of the 54th Division (total, forty battalions) under Bilderling. But as these troops were not yet seasoned, it was impossible to rely on their performing such an extremely difficult task as that of holding in check Kuroki's superior numbers on the necessarily extended position they would have to occupy [this fear was justified by subsequent events]. These considerations led to the adoption of the second alternative.

On the 31st, under cover of darkness and without being pressed, we began the evacuation of the advanced positions, which had already been of value to us, inasmuch as the enemy had been

* The positions held on August 31 by the portion of Kuroki's army that crossed the river were only eleven miles from the railway.

weakened by the losses incurred in attacking them. By the following morning as many as 100 battalions, with artillery and cavalry, had crossed on to the right bank of the river. The Japanese did not occupy our abandoned positions till the evening of that date, when they began to shell Liao-yang. The general disposition of the army was as follows: 56 battalions, 10 *sotnias*, and 144 guns (under Zarubaeff) were still on the left bank; 30 battalions, 5 *sotnias*, and 84 guns were on the right for the defence of Liao-yang itself. In addition to the small columns detailed to guard our flanks and rear, the remainder of the army, totalling 93 battalions, 73 squadrons and *sotnias*, and 352 guns, were told off to attack Kuroki. But in making this calculation as to the number of battalions available, it is essential to explain a very important factor. During the whole period of the war from its commencement till August only 6,000 men had been received at the front as drafts to repair wastage, and, as I have said, we began the fighting round Liao-yang with a shortage of 15,000 men. The result of this, taken in connection with the great number of men that had to be detached for various non-combatant duties, and also our losses in the fighting that had already taken place in the neighbourhood, was that the actual strength of the ninety-three battalions was, on September 1, only from 50,000 to 55,000 rifles. For instance, the

twenty-one battalions comprising the 10th Corps (which took part in the affair of September 2) only numbered 12,000 rifles, and the total of the twenty-four battalions of the 1st Siberians only amounted to 10,000. Kuroki's army, on the other hand, was calculated to number approximately from 65,000 to 70,000 men. The plan of operations for the troops crossing on to the right bank was as follows: The force was to deploy between the position held by the 17th Corps near the village of Hsi-kuan-tun and the heights near the Yen-tai mines, which were to have been held by Orloff's force of thirteen battalions. Using the Hsi-kuan-tun position as a pivot, the army was to throw its left forward so as to strike the Japanese in flank. The position for the 17th Corps near this village was chosen by Bilderling in preference to that which had been prepared for defence beforehand on the right bank on the line San-chia-tzu-Ta-tzu-pu, and sufficient attention was not paid to its fortification. All that was done was to dig a few trenches, and no field of fire had even been cleared in the *kao-liang* crops. The consequence was that, in the early morning of September 2, the enemy drove the 137th Niejinsk Regiment from the peak north-east of this place, which constituted the left flank position of the 17th Corps, and to regain this hill became the first thing we had to do. For this Bilderling was given forty-four battalions, with the 3rd Siberians

in reserve, while the 1st Siberians and Orloff's column were to assist by threatening the Japanese right. Both Bilderling and Shtakelberg had been instructed as to what was expected of them, but they were given an absolutely free hand as to their dispositions. Notwithstanding the large force under Bilderling's command, the operations failed in their object. Although the peak was recaptured on the evening of the 2nd, we were again driven off during the night, and had to fall back some two miles, only halting on the Erh-ta-ho heights.

Orloff, on the other hand, moved from his position on the heights south of the Yen-tai mines before he ought to have done, without waiting for the arrival of the 1st Siberians. His troops became at once immersed in a perfect sea of *kao-liang*, and were fired on from front and flank ; parts of the column were seized with panic, and the whole force retreated in disorder towards Yen-tai station. A large portion even went as far as the station itself. This sudden and unexpected departure from the field of 12,000 men had a disastrous result on this flank. We lost an excellent position, which should have served as the support for our advance from the left, and the enemy, spreading away to the north, had by 5 p.m., in spite of the gallant efforts of Samsonoff and his Siberian Cossacks, occupied the whole range of heights and the Yen-tai mines. With

the occupation of these heights the whole of our left was endangered. At midnight Shtakelberg reported that, owing to his heavy losses in the preceding battles, he would not be able to take the offensive, or even to accept battle on the following day.

Meanwhile the armies of Oku and Nodzu had advanced in force against Liao-yang, but had been driven back by Zarubaeff. Here the main burden of the fighting fell on the 5th East Siberian Rifle Division, which behaved extremely well, as did the regiments of the 4th Siberians. On the night of the 3rd, however, Zarubaeff reported that, though the enemy had been repulsed, he had only three battalions left in reserve, and needed reinforcements and gun ammunition. At the same time a message came in from Lubavin, who was covering the Pen-hsi-hu-Mukden line, informing me of his retirement to the Tung-chia-fen Ling (Pass), sixteen miles from Mukden. From this it is evident that if, choosing the first alternative, we had marched against Oku and Nodzu, Kuroki could most certainly have driven back the 17th Corps and 54th Division, and have seized the railway in rear of our troops moving southwards. As we knew, however, that Kuroki was not operating against us with his main body during the battle of the 2nd, we realized it might have been sent to turn our left. Such being the situation, we

had to decide whether to maintain our hold on the river, or to abandon Liao-yang and retire to the position on the left bank of the Hun Ho in front of Mukden, which had been already fortified.

As regards the first alternative, it seemed possible that we might, by an immense effort and skilful manœuvring, be able to hold on to Liao-yang and throw Kuroki behind the Tai-tzu Ho. But for this it was essential to draw in the force that had crossed to the right bank, and to deploy it on a fresh line farther to the north, so that we might be able to attack the enemy's position on the heights near the Yen-tai mines from the north as well as from the west. Such a movement would have exposed our right, and would have isolated the position still held by the 17th Corps on the right bank of the river. The Japanese might drive it in and issue in rear of the troops at Liao-yang, for that place was only eleven miles distant from the position to which the 17th Corps would have had to retire if it were driven back. The defenders of Liao-yang, being then attacked by Oku and Nodzu combined, would be in a critical situation. As regards the second alternative, a retirement on Mukden presented great disadvantages and dangers. It increased the distance to Port Arthur; it would have to be carried out under pressure from the enemy in front and on the left, and the roads had been so much damaged by rain that it was

doubtful whether we should succeed in getting our transport or even artillery to Mukden. The abandonment of Liao-yang could not fail both to depress the troops who had so gallantly defended it and encourage the enemy. But, on the other hand, we should be extricated by such a retirement from a situation in which we were threatened in front and flank. A successful withdrawal would also give time for the 1st Army Corps to come up, and, what was not less important, for us to replenish artillery ammunition, of which we were very short. Besides this, the banks of the Tai-tzu Ho were specially unsuited for our troops, as they were almost entirely covered with *kao-liang*. Our men were unused to this, lost their heads whenever they got into it, and were very liable to panic.

On the whole, our past experiences of the offensive did not inspire any confidence that we should be able to cope with the difficult situation implied by a retention of Liao-yang. I decided, therefore, on the retirement towards Mukden, which was carried out by September 7. The most difficult work, especially on the early morning of the 5th, fell to the lot of the 1st Siberians, who had to beat off Kuroki's force attacking from the east; this they did with success, and without losing a single trophy, in spite of the difficulties in which we were placed.

A general account of the operations round

Liao-yang, and a statement of all the considerations which led to our retirement, were telegraphed to the Emperor on September 11. On the 14th the army was made happy by the following gracious message, which I received from His Majesty :

“ From your reports of the fighting at Liao-yang, I appreciate that it was impossible for you to have held that position longer without risk of being completely cut off from your communications. Under such conditions, and in face of the existing difficulties, the retirement of the whole force across country without the loss of guns or baggage was a brilliant feat of arms. I thank you and the gallant troops under your command for their heroic conduct and enduring self-sacrifice. May God help you all !”

Upon retirement, our troops were grouped in two principal bodies—

1. The defence of the main position on the left bank of the Hun Ho was entrusted to the 10th and 17th Corps under Bilderling, to whom was subordinated Dembovski’s force of 10 battalions of the 5th Siberians, which was guarding the near right flank of the main position. Altogether, the troops under Bilderling’s command amounted to 75 battalions, 53 squadrons and *sotnias*, 190 guns, 24 mortars, and 3 sapper battalions.

2. The protection of the left flank from Fu-shun to the west was entrusted to Ivanoff’s force, consisting of the 2nd and 3rd Brigades of the

4th and some units of the 5th Siberians (total, 62 battalions, 26 *sotnias*, 128 guns, and 2 sapper battalions).

3. To keep touch between these two main groups were the 1st Siberians under Shtakelberg (total, 24 battalions, 10 squadrons and *sotnias*, 56 guns, and 1 sapper battalion). To his force was entrusted the defence of the portion of the Hun Ho from Chiu-tien to Pu-ling.

4. The general reserve was disposed in two groups—

(a) 4th Siberians (24 battalions, 6 squadrons, 96 guns, 12 mortars, and 1 sapper battalion) on the line Erh-tai-tzu-Khoukha.*

(b) 1st Army Corps, which concentrated in Mukden early in September† (32 battalions, 6 squadrons, 96 guns, 1 sapper battalion), along the Mandarin road on the line Pu-ho-Ta-wa.

5. The protection of the extreme right was entrusted to Kossagovski (6½ battalions, 9 squadrons, 14 guns), the main body of which was at Kao-li-tun on the Liao.

6. A brigade of the 6th Siberians (8 battalions and 1½ *sotnias*) was concentrated at Tieh-ling to protect our communications.

7. The Trans-Baikal and Ural Cossack Brigades which did not belong to any corps were joined

* [? Houton.—Ed.]

† The corps also arrived at the front with a shortage of about 400 men per regiment—i.e., 1,600 per division.

together under the command of Mischenko (21 *sotnias* and 8 guns).

Besides putting the finishing touches to the main position at Mukden, which had already been fortified, the defensive work consisted of strengthening the Fu-liang and Fu-shun positions, and throwing up some works on the right bank of the Hun Ho between Mukden and Fu-liang. The object of these was to check the enemy crossing until our reserves could come up. In addition to this, much was done to improve the communications towards Tieh-ling. On September 20 I learned by telegram from the Viceroy of the formation of the 2nd Manchurian Army. This was to comprise the 6th Siberians and 8th Army Corps, five Rifle brigades from Russia, a Cossack infantry brigade, the 4th Don and 2nd Caucasian Cossack Divisions, and three dragoon regiments of the 10th Cavalry Division. General Gripenberg was appointed to the command of this force on September 24.

Our position at Mukden had some very grave defects.

1. Its left flank (Fu-liang – Fu-shun) was, owing to the bend in the Hun Ho to the north-east of Mukden, thrown much too far back. If the enemy were successful on this flank, and came out on to our communications, we should be compelled to abandon the main position prematurely.

2. Almost immediately in rear of the position was the River Hun, which was at the time unfordable, and could only be crossed by bridges. Behind the river was the town itself.

3. The Fu-shun coal-mines, which were most necessary to us (for railway fuel), were right in front of the position.

These drawbacks, as well as our great desire to prevent any of the enemy's forces being detached for the reinforcement of Nogi's besieging army, drove us to try and take the offensive as soon as possible.

Meanwhile the drafts whereby to replace our losses were still arriving at the front very slowly; during July and August only 4,200 men were received. On September 29 the eight corps composing the Manchurian Army could only muster 151,000 rifles, the deficit in officers being 670. Besides these corps, the Viceroy put the 6th Siberian Corps* under my command, with the proviso that it should not be included in the army, and should not be split up.† It was concentrated at Mukden on October 8. My requests that the units of the 1st Siberian Division—some ten battalions—which were not included in the army, might be made over to me were not acceded to. But although we were

* Less one brigade garrisoning Tieh-ling.

† [Presumably because it was destined for the 2nd Army.
—Ed.]

really too weak, an advance seemed more advantageous than waiting for the enemy to attack, for there seemed little chance of our being able to hold our ground on the Mukden positions.

According to our information, the Japanese main forces had crossed on to the right bank of the Tai-tzu Ho, between Liao-yang and Pen-hsi-hu, and were disposed approximately as follows: In the centre, behind the line Yen-tai station-Yen-tai mines, six divisions with brigades in reserve; on the right, écheloned along the line Pan-chia-pu-tzu-Pen-hsi-hu, two divisions with brigades in reserve; on the left, more or less along the line San-de-pu-Sha-tai-tzu, two divisions with their reserves. The enemy had fortified their positions on the Yen-tai heights and at Pan-chia-pu-tzu. It was decided, therefore, that the first object of our advance was to hurl the Japanese back on to the left bank of the Tai-tzu Ho. To do this we were to deliver a frontal attack, and at the same time endeavour to turn their right, so that, if successful, we should dislodge them from the hills. Orders were issued for the forward movement to commence on October 5. The following was the plan of advance decided upon by me:

1. *Western Force*.—This force, under Bildering, consisting of the 10th and 17th Corps (total, 64 battalions, 40 squadrons and *sotnias*, 196 guns, and 2 sapper battalions), was to make

a demonstration in front against the enemy's main force.

2. *Eastern Force*.—This force, under Shtakelberg, consisting of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Siberians (total, 73 battalions, 29 squadrons and *sotnias*, 142 guns, 6 mortars, 32 machine-guns, and 3 sapper battalions), was to attack the right flank of the enemy, moving round it from the east. The first objective of this force was the enemy's positions at Pan-chia-pu-tzu.*

3. *The General Reserve*.—This, consisting of the 1st Army Corps and 4th Siberians, with Mischenko's brigade (total, 56 battalions, 20 *sotnias*, 208 guns, 30 mortars, and 2 sapper battalions), was to move up in rear of the interval between the western and eastern forces.

4. *The 6th Siberians* (32 battalions, 6 *sotnias*, 96 guns, and 1 sapper battalion) was to remain temporarily in Mukden (with a brigade at Tiehling), so that it might either be moved to a flank or added to the reserve, according as the operations developed.

5. *Flank Guards*.—A force of $30\frac{1}{2}$ battalions, 39 *sotnias*, 82 guns, and 1 sapper battalion was told off to protect the flanks. Of this, $19\frac{1}{2}$ battalions, 25 *sotnias*, 64 guns, and the sapper battalion were to take part in the attack of

* Including Rennenkampf's column, Shtakelberg had under him 85 battalions, 43 *sotnias*, 174 guns, and 3 sapper battalions.

the enemy's position while keeping touch with Dembovski's and Rennenkampf's columns of the eastern and western forces respectively.

6. Should the enemy concentrate towards their right, an endeavour was to be made to break through their centre in the direction of the Yen-tai mines by the 6th Siberians, with Bilderling's force and the general reserve.

The advance began on October 5, and meeting with no determined opposition, we on the 9th occupied the following positions :

Western Force.—The line Shih-li-ho-Ta-pu.

Eastern Force.—The line San-chia-tzu-Shang-shan-tzu-Ununin.

In the Centre.—By the range of hills south of Khaamatán (with the assistance of a portion of the general reserve).

The 4th Siberians, especially the Tomsk, Barnaul, and Irkutsk Regiments, did excellent work, as did Mischenko's mounted force, reinforced by the 4th East Siberian Rifle Regiment. Rennenkampf's column moved out into the Tai-tzu Ho Valley, and worked along both banks of the river towards Pen-hsi-hu. Though the independent regiments of the 1st and 3rd Siberians suffered heavily, overcame the difficulties of the locality, and made altogether a gallant bid for success, they failed in their object, mainly owing to the lack of co-ordination in the plan of operations, and of cohesion in its

execution. On the evening of the 10th the Japanese themselves took the offensive, having concentrated their main forces opposite our right and centre. Bilderling's western force, after fighting desperately against heavy odds and losing forty-six guns, fell back on the 12th on to the main position on the Sha Ho. Our centre, augmented by the 1st Corps, found itself, in consequence, too far forward, and was obliged on the evening of the 13th to commence a retirement on to the high ground near the position of the western force, and occupied the heights south of Erh-ta-ho. From the 10th to the 12th Shtakelberg's eastern force made a gallant but vain endeavour to get possession of the almost inaccessible ridges to the north of the road from Pen-hsi-hu to the Yen-tai mines. His dangerous position, thirteen miles in advance, and the necessity for collecting enough troops in our centre to repulse the further attacks of the enemy's main body, compelled me on the 12th to order him to withdraw to the high ground of the position occupied by the rest of the army, and to move a portion of his force in support of our centre. The enemy's further attempts to drive us from the ground we were holding were unsuccessful, though we were hard pressed on the Sha Ho, and the general desire to retire on our Mukden positions became very great. In a night attack on the

15th the enemy succeeded in dislodging two regiments of the 22nd Division from the "One Tree Peak," which they were holding on the left bank of the Sha Ho between the villages of Sha-ho-pu and Sha-ho-tung. The loss of this height, which commanded us on the right bank of the river, and constituted, so to speak, the key of our position, by no means improved the situation. On the evening of the 16th, therefore, I concentrated a force of twenty-five battalions under Putiloff, whom I ordered to attack the enemy in front and flank. After desperate hand-to-hand fighting, he succeeded on the morning of the 17th in driving them off the heights, and captured eleven guns, one machine-gun, many limbers and waggons. This episode put the finishing touch to the major operations of both sides, and we now proceeded to pass the winter in our respective positions in close touch with one another.

The reasons of the indecisive issue to the battle were:

1. Shtakelberg's unskilful disposition of the large force put under his command, which was (as we discovered later) almost three times the size of that opposed to him.
2. The absence of proper control and generalship among senior commanders of the western force.
3. The abortive operations of, and lack of

energy displayed by the officer commanding the 10th Corps. (Among other things, he not only retired quite unnecessarily on October 12 from his position on the left bank of the Sha Ho, but also neglected to warn his neighbour in command of the 1st Corps, who was in consequence placed in a critical position.)

4. The useless manœuvres of the officer commanding the 31st Division, who several times ordered one of his brigades to retire without due cause.

5. The unsteadiness of many units.*

6. The lack of cohesion in the operations of the 6th Siberians (on the right of the western force).

During this battle of the Sha Ho the senior commanders—Generals Bilderling and Shtakelberg—were given instructions as to what was required of them generally, but were left to make their dispositions independently.

As will be seen from the above brief sketch of events, the September fighting had no decisive results. The two sides suffered equally, and lost about 50,000 men each. Still, our assumption of the offensive, even with inadequate numbers, greatly improved our strategical

* A very large number of men, particularly of the 1st Corps, left the ranks without reason. At Mukden, however, this corps fought with great gallantry and steadiness.

position by moving our general front thirteen miles forward in front of Mukden, and afforded us a matter of four and a half months of time. As soon as we occupied the positions on the Sha Ho from Shou-lin-tzu on the right flank to Kao-tu-ling on the left, we set to work fortifying them. Besides ten battalions of the 1st Corps, the whole of the 1st Siberians and twenty-four battalions of the 6th Corps were moved into the general reserve in rear of the centre, and we were confident that we would be able to hold our ground. We still had, however, a very small number of men—indeed, in some units the shortage was alarming. The total strength of the 252 battalions comprising our army on October 25 was only 140,000 rifles, which works out at an average strength of 550 per battalion, while many battalions could not even muster 400 men. Not less disquieting was the lack of officers, which now amounted in the infantry alone to over 2,700, or an average deficiency per battalion of eleven. Meanwhile the drafts to repair wastage were still coming up in driblets. In October and November we only received some 13,000 men. It was not till December 8 that they began to reach us in any quantity; during that month and the first half of January 72,000 arrived. I reported upon this vital question in my letters to the Tsar of October 26 and November 5.

In his despatches of October 23 and 26 His Majesty was pleased to inform me that I had been appointed to the supreme command of all the forces in the Far East, that General Linievitch was appointed to the command of the 1st, and General Baron Kaulbars to the command of the 3rd Army.* My first act was to augment the army by adding to it the whole of the 1st Siberian and 61st Divisions, the latter of which was intended by Alexeieff for the Pri-Amur district. This at once added 20,000 rifles to the field army; the leading units also of the 8th Corps began to arrive at the beginning of November, and at the end of the month were concentrated at Mukden. But the main thing which still remained to be done was the improvement of our railway communication with Russia, which became more than ever necessary on account of the increased army to be supplied.

On November 28 the effective strength of all three armies, including the 8th Corps, amounted to 210,000 men. Our information as to the enemy put their strength at this date at about 200,000. Although we were rather superior in numbers, our superiority was too slight to insure a successful offensive under the particularly difficult conditions offered by the intense cold weather, and the fact that the enemy's positions

* [Gripenberg had already been appointed to the command of the 2nd Army.—ED.]

were strongly fortified. The low temperature rendered the lightest trench work practically impossible, and made the provision of a large amount of warm clothing an absolute necessity. Our preparations for the offensive, as regards making Mukden an intermediate base and our engineering work, began in November. In addition to the branch railway to the Fu-shun mines, which was completed that month, a branch was laid to the right flank of our dispositions,* and a field line to Rennenkampf's force on the left.† But still, when December came we were not ready to advance, mainly owing to the delay in railway construction, largely caused by the weather. Although I was informed by the War Minister, in a communication dated November 8, that the running capacity of the Siberian and Trans-Baikal lines would from October 28 be brought up to twelve pairs of military trains, we never received as many right up to the end of the war. The result of this was that the expected drafts, as well as the three Rifle brigades, arrived about ten days later than we had calculated on receiving them, and there was great delay in the distribution of warm clothing to the men, particularly felt boots. Very great difficulty also was experienced in collecting the food-supplies

* From Ssu-chia-tun station to Ta-wang-chiang-pu.

† From Fu-shun to Ma-chia-tun.

necessary for the forward movement, and in organizing new transport units.

When, in the middle of December, I summoned a meeting of the three army commanders and consulted them as to the possible date of an advance, in view of the critical state of affairs at Port Arthur, they unanimously stated that it was essential to await the arrival of the whole of the 16th Corps. On receiving the news of the surrender of the fortress, I again asked their opinions as to whether—in view of Oyama's armies being probably augmented by that of Nogi—they did not consider it desirable to commence an advance at an earlier date. But they still adhered to their former opinion, modifying it only to the extent that we should begin our advance while this corps was arriving, and not wait until its concentration was completed. As regards the actual plan of the offensive operations, the opinions of the three army commanders were the same—namely, that we should deliver the main blow with as large a force as possible at the enemy's left, and envelop it. The only difference of opinion was as to the depth of this envelopment. The boldest and most original plan was that proposed by Gripenberg—namely, that he should undertake, with the 2nd Army, a wide turning movement—almost an envelopment—of the enemy's left in the direction of Yen-tai station, and cut himself free from the 3rd Army. He

considered it necessary to have seven corps under his command for this operation. This, however, was impracticable, as, even without leaving any troops as a general reserve, besides the 16th Corps then arriving, only four corps could be given him—namely, the 8th, 10th, 1st Siberian, and the Composite Rifle Corps. General Linievitch, who was apprehensive that the enemy might attack the 1st Army, thought it dangerous to give Gripenberg the 1st Siberians. Kaulbars, in his turn, thought it impossible, without grave risk of the 3rd Army being driven from its positions, to detach any portion of it to the 2nd Army. Finally, Gripenberg's plan, though it promised great advantages in the event of success, seemed very risky, for it extended our already long front still more, and made it so attenuated that it would be liable to be broken by a determined attack at any point. Moreover, no general reserve would be left at my disposal with which to deal with any unforeseen emergency.

After proposing the above bold plan, Gripenberg suddenly went to the other extreme, and became pessimistic. For instance, on January 13, he informed me that the campaign was as good as lost, that we ought to retire to Harbin, hold on to that point and Vladivostok, and from thence move with two armies "in other directions." On my asking him which were the directions in which we should move, he gave no

clear explanation. The same idea was expressed also in a report received on the same day (dated January 12) from General Ruzski, the Chief of the Staff of the 2nd Army. In it was contained Grippenberg's opinion that it was impossible for us to dream of being successful after Nogi's arrival, and that—

“The officer commanding the Army accordingly inclines to the conclusion that, under the circumstances, the best solution of the question would be to fall back to Mukden, or further if necessary, and there to await a favourable opportunity to take the offensive.”

However, it was finally decided, in accordance with the opinions of Linievitch and Kaulbars, and with the consent of Grippenberg, to take the offensive in January, on the condition that complete and direct touch was maintained between all three armies.

According to our information, the strength of the Japanese armies was approximately as follows :

Kuroki's Army	...	68 battalions, 21 squadrons, and 204 guns
Nodzu's Army	...	50 battalions, 11 squadrons, and 168 guns
Oku's Army	...	60 battalions, 29 squadrons, and 234 guns

or a total in all three armies under Oyama of 178 battalions, 61 squadrons, and 606 guns. It was calculated that they could put 200,000 rifles

in the field against us on January 14, 1905. As a matter of fact, we underestimated the number. From the prisoners we took we knew accurately what was going on in their 1st Army, but we were unable to ascertain with sufficient accuracy and in good time what was happening in the rear, or what reinforcements were being received. Their fortified positions were as follows: The left flank up to the village of Hsiao-tung-kou was held by Oku. In the centre was Nodzu's army. On the right was Kuroki. Opposite Rennenkampf, on our extreme left, was a force under Kavamura amounting to about 15,000 to 20,000 men. Nogi's army was estimated at 72 battalions, 5 squadrons, and 156 guns; but which units had reached Oyama, and how they were grouped, we did not know.

In order to induce the enemy to detach as many men as possible for their line of communications, and so weaken their front, to handicap their supply arrangements, and to stop the rail transport of Nogi's units to the front, a raid by a mounted force* was organized against their line of communications. The objects of this raid, which was under Mischenko, were:

1. To seize Newchuang station, and destroy the large stocks of food-supplies collected there; and—

* Of 72 squadrons and *sotnias*, 4 mounted scout parties, and 22 guns.

2. To blow up the railway-bridges and destroy the track on the portion of the line from Tashih-chiao to Kai-ping.

Neither object was fully attained, chiefly owing to the slowness with which the force moved. Individual episodes that occurred are, however, very instructive, and show that our cavalry is quite fitted to perform the most self-sacrificing duties.

The plan agreed upon for the main advance was explained in my orders of January 19. Just as it had been in September, our primary object was to drive the enemy behind the Tai-tzu Ho, and to inflict on him as much damage as possible. The force selected for our first attentions was Oku's left-flank army, the left wing of which was to be enveloped. The advance of the 1st and 3rd Armies against the positions held by Nodzu and Kuroki were to be started and developed in accordance with, and depending upon, the measure of success attending the efforts of the 2nd and 3rd Armies to capture the enemy's left-flank positions on the Sha Ho. The armies were given the following tasks :

1. The 2nd Army was to gain possession of the line of Japanese works San-de-pu-Lita-jen-tun-Ta-tai-San-chia-tzu, and then the line Tsun-lun-ian-tun-Ta-ta-san-pu along the Sha Ho. And, conformably to the enemy's action and the success attained by the 3rd Army, it

was, while throwing a strong containing force to the south, to develop its operations towards the line San-tia-tzu-Shih-li-ho, and on the heights south of the last village.

2. The 3rd Army was to capture the line of works Chang-ling-pu-Ling-shen-pu, and then the line along the Sha Ho from the latter point to Hun-ling-pu inclusive. And, conformably to the enemy's action and the successes attained by the 2nd Army, it was to develop its operations towards the line Hei-te-kai Peak-Hung-pao Shan Peak.

3. The 1st Army was to co-operate in the capture of Hou-te-kai Peak, and seize the heights near the villages of Cheng-san-lin-tzu and Shih-shan-tzu. And according to the action of the enemy and the successes attained by the 2nd and 3rd Armies, it was, with the assistance of the 3rd Army, to develop its operations towards the positions near the villages Ta-pu, San-chia-tzu, Shan-lu-ho-tzu, which we had occupied on the 10th to 12th October.

In my orders of January 21 it was clearly defined that the above scheme would require modification dependent on the line of action adopted by the Japanese.

If, contrary to our calculations, the enemy preferred to contain our 2nd and 3rd Armies, and to fall with the rest of their forces on the 1st, or on the interval between the 1st and 3rd Armies,

the position would call for a very energetic advance against their flank by the 2nd and 3rd Armies.

If they should at once fall back on their second line of positions without holding on to their first line, we should endeavour to turn their retirement into a disordered retreat.

January 25 was the day fixed for the commencement of our advance, but, owing to the action of Grippenberg, who should have started the movement, the arrangements had to be altered. Almost a fortnight before our operations began our chances of success had been unfortunately reduced by certain dispositions made by him. The corps to be attached to his army were disposed as follows:

8th Corps	...	South of the River Hun on both sides of the railway.
10th Corps	...	At Bai-ta-pu village on the Mandarin road.
1st Siberians	...	Behind the right flank of the 1st Army.

The right of the 2nd Army between the 5th Siberians and the River Hun was only protected by cavalry, while a separate column of five battalions and two cavalry regiments under Kossagovski was on the right bank of the river. Notwithstanding the instructions issued that these dispositions were to hold good as long as possible, in order that we might conceal our

intentions from the enemy, and also that the 10th Corps—intended to act as a reserve in the event of their striking at our centre—was not to be moved from its place without my knowledge, on January 14 Gripenberg transferred the 14th Division over on to the left bank of the Hun, and on the 16th, without letting me know, moved the 10th Corps closer to the right of the 3rd Army. These movements, of course, at once disclosed our intentions, and information soon came in that the enemy had, in their turn, commenced moving their troops westwards and fortifying opposite our new dispositions.

The strength of the army was :

	Battalions.	Squadrons and Sotnias.	Field-Guns.	Mortars.	Siege-Guns.	Machine-Guns.	Sapper Battalions.
2nd Army	120	92	412	24	4	20	3
3rd Army	72	18	294	54	56	12	3
1st Army	127	43	360	12	—	8	5
General Reserve	42	—	120	—	—	4	—
Total	361	153	1,186	90*	60	44	11

By the middle of January our numbers were, as regards rank and file, almost up to the

* Including thirty siege-guns.

authorized war strength, except in the Composite Rifle, 8th and 16th Corps, which had arrived short, so that the total of our forces was about 300,000 rifles. Although the establishment in officers was not fully complete, we now had some 5,600 in the infantry, which gave us on the average 15 per battalion.

The advance began on January 25, as ordered, the 1st Siberians first seizing the village of Huan-lo-to-tzu, and later, after a hot fight lasting all day, the village of Hei-kou-tai;* Kossagovski's column gained possession of Chi-tai-tzu and Ma-ma-kai without much difficulty. San-de-pu was not attacked that day. Of the 14th Division, which was intended for this attack, three regiments were sent on the 22nd to join Mischenko's force, in order to strike a separate blow at a small Japanese force of all arms, which, according to spies, was in occupation of A-shih-niu. Mischenko moved against this place with his infantry, but found no enemy there, and so the 14th Division was marched forty miles on a fool's errand, and only arrived at Chang-tan on the morning of the 26th, thoroughly exhausted. The action of the 25th for the village of Hei-kou-tai, which we only seized with great difficulty and after heavy loss, in spite of our overwhelming superiority, indicated that such strongly fortified points as San-

* Its garrison was not more than two battalions.

de-pu and Lita-jen-tun could not be attacked without proper previous preparation, for we could not afford to waste men. I particularly underlined the necessity for this in my directions—“For the operations of the 2nd Army in capturing the enemy’s fortified line San-de-pu-Lita-jen-tun-Ta-tai,” dated January 15, and also in my instructions with regard to the 2nd Army’s operations against the Lita jen tun portion, dated January 16. Notwithstanding this, in the orders for the dispositions of the 2nd Army on January 26, it was to operate on the line from Hou-leng-tai to the Hun—over a distance of ten miles against a fortified position—and to capture the two strongly defended points, San-de-pu and Lita-jen-tun. Grippenberg, moreover, came to no understanding with Kaulbars as to co-operation, and it was only upon a request made by the commander of the 10th Corps that the commander of the 3rd Army arranged to co-operate with his artillery, and so prepare the assault of the 5th Siberians. Being by chance in Hsui-tun just at the time when the 10th Corps was making ready to carry out its allotted task, I was able to avert a dispersed attack (over a stretch of thirteen miles), and to prevent the employment of troops in an unprepared assault on strongly fortified positions. The attack to be made by the left flank of the 2nd Army on the morning of January 26 was

countermanded by Gripenberg himself, but the order was delayed in transmission, and if I had not been in Hsui-tun it would have taken place.

The attack of the village of San-de-pu by the 14th Division alone failed, and it could hardly have done otherwise in the absence of any artillery preparation. Neither the ground round it nor the fortifications of the place itself had been studied, and no sketch-plan of it had been made or issued to the troops. The result was that our guns shelled a village called Pei-tai-tzu, north-east of San-de-pu, all day instead of the place itself, which they did not touch, while the 14th Division attacked and captured Pao-tai-tzu (to the west of San-de-pu), and reported to me they had taken San-de-pu. The outer enclosure of San-de-pu village was mistaken by this division for that of a *reduit* inside the village, and acting upon the assumption that they were not strong enough to seize this *reduit*, they were ordered back to their former positions, and abandoned Pao-tai-tzu. Meanwhile, having received the report that San-de-pu had been taken, Gripenberg gave orders for the heavy guns and mortars with the 8th Corps to be sent at once to the 10th Corps, in order to prepare the assault of Lita-jen-tun next day. At the same time, as his men, who had had no sleep for three nights, were utterly exhausted, he asked permission to rest his army on the 27th. Accordingly, the

1st Siberians were ordered to halt in the area south-east of Hei-kou-tai ; but as we had not yet taken this area, the order led to this corps having to fight a separate action on the 27th for the possession of Su-ma-pu and Piao-tsao. When it became known on the morning of the 27th that San-de-pu had not been taken, Gripenberg was obliged to give up all idea of repeating the attack on the 27th, as he had sent his heavy guns to the 10th Corps. The decision was also necessitated by the fact that the Japanese had sent up strong reinforcements. When Shtakelberg was informed that San-de-pu had not been taken, he did not consider it possible to carry out Gripenberg's twice repeated order to cease his attack, and late in the evening, after a hot fight, he seized the greater part of Su-ma-pu by a disconnected attack with four regiments. But being counter-attacked at dawn on the 28th by superior numbers both in front and on the left, he was forced to fall back with great loss (6,000 men). By that evening the 1st Siberians were holding a position on the line Tou-pao-Chu-san-ho-tzu, which the Japanese continued to assault with great fury till the early morning. The despatch of troops towards Su-ma-pu in no way met the circumstances : it led to a needless digression from the main objective of the whole operations—*i.e.*, San-de-pu—and generally to a still greater extension of the

already too long front occupied by the 2nd Army. In order to divert the enemy's attention from our right flank by a demonstration, the villages of Hsia-tai-tzu and La-pa-tai were attacked and seized on January 27 by part of the 10th Corps under Tserpitski; but as we were not ready to storm San-de-pu, these places were abandoned.

The cavalry of the 2nd Army, under Mischenko, made a bold dash at the enemy's rear, and succeeded in killing and capturing a good many; but their success would have been far greater had the Don regiments under Teleshoff not been late in arriving. Mischenko, who was at the head of the advanced *sotnias*, was severely wounded, and Teleshoff, who succeeded in the command, failed to carry out the task entrusted to him. He neither sent word that the Japanese were receiving reinforcements, nor helped the Siberians when they were fighting for Su-ma-pu.

By evening on the 28th the situation in the 2nd Army was roughly as follows: The positions north of San-de-pu, along a front of eight miles—from the positions occupied by the 3rd Army up to the River Hun—were held by the 10th Corps and 15th Division; sixteen battalions of the former had been brought closer to the river, and behind them was the reserve of the 3rd Army, a brigade of the 17th Corps. The Composite Rifle Corps and 1st Siberians were distributed along a front west of San-de-pu, on

the line Chan-chua-tzu-Tou-pao. Kossagovski's force was at San-chia-tzu. The reserve of the 2nd Army consisted of only one regiment of the 14th Division,* and Gripenberg had (26th to 28th) three times asked for reinforcements to be sent him from the general reserve. The front of the 2nd Army was spread over twenty miles. Thus, by the evening of the 28th the greater part of that army was separated from the 3rd Army by San-de-pu village, which was still in the enemy's hands, and was dispersed over a long line fronting south-east. Whilst so distributed, not only was it difficult to assist it with troops from the 3rd Army in the event of its being attacked, but there was the danger, if the enemy reinforced heavily, of their being in a position to employ San-de-pu as a pivot, force back the Rifle Corps, and break through on to the communications of the 1st Siberians. Meanwhile reports came in which showed that only a portion of the enemy's available forces were operating against Gripenberg, while the movement of Kuroki's and Nodzu's troops to the west showed that the enemy could still throw another six divisions into the fight. They might be moved against the weakened and extended front of the 3rd Army, thrust into the

* Two regiments of the four in this division had been sent to reinforce the Composite Rifle Corps, and one regiment to reinforce the 1st Siberians.

interval between the 3rd Army and the Hun Ho, or used as reinforcements to the troops operating against our positions west of San-de-pu.

About 7 p.m. Kaulbars reported to me that the enemy had at 4 p.m. begun a movement in great strength towards their advanced positions. At the same time this movement became disclosed, and we opened artillery and rifle fire. As the reserve of the 3rd Army had already been given to the 2nd, I was obliged, as a temporary measure, to give Kaulbars the 72nd Division from my reserve. This left me with only thirty battalions of the 16th Corps, which had just arrived. Although the positions held by the Composite Rifle Corps and 1st Siberians had behind them an ice-covered river with steep frozen banks that hindered the crossing of all three arms, and were therefore inconvenient, yet the situation of the 2nd Army—enveloping San-de-pu, as it did—offered us certain advantages if we could only drive back the troops attacking the 1st Siberians and succeed in storming that place on the 29th. When, therefore, the above report came in from Kaulbars, the Chief of Staff of the 2nd Army was asked on the telephone when it was proposed to start the assault on San-de-pu. To this Ruzski replied that it certainly could not take place next day, as it had not been properly prepared by artillery, and that it was impossible then to fix

a time for it. On account of the vagueness of this reply, he was instructed to report to Gripenberg the information sent in by Kaulbars, and also the orders in which the 2nd Army was instructed to take up a more concentrated position in the early hours of the 29th, assuming as their first task the defence of the line Ssu-fang-tai-Chang-tan-Ta-man-ta-pu. Gripenberg, who was in a neighbouring apartment with a telephone, did not say a single word to this message,* and these orders were carried out. All the enemy's attacks on the positions Tou-pao-Chu-san-ho-tzu were repulsed by the 1st Siberians before retiring.

Thus ended our first attempt at the offensive, and it cost us 10,000 men. The chief cause of our failure was, of course, our neglect to prepare properly the assault on San-de-pu, which again was a sign that we did not yet sufficiently respect our foe. Though a contempt of the enemy was all through the war evinced by the senior officers when they first arrived at the front, yet after our first actions it was generally, and perhaps unfortunately, replaced by an exaggerated idea of their merits. The absence of proper touch between Gripenberg and the corps under him was also responsible for much, as, owing to it, the transmission of orders and of information was greatly

* General Gripenberg could not use the telephone himself, as he was somewhat deaf.

delayed. The whole of the 8th and Composite Rifle Corps, again, did not shine in action. For instance, on the 28th, certain units of the 15th Division, though not at all pressed, began to retire without permission. By doing so they exposed the siege battery they were covering, which was preparing to destroy its guns and blow up its ammunition preparatory to retiring itself.

On January 30 Gripenberg reported himself sick by letter, and by the Tsar's permission left on February 3 for St. Petersburg. This action of his set a fatal example both to those under him and to the rest of the army, and was most harmful to all discipline. The opinions, also, that he had expressed, to the effect that the campaign was virtually over, and that we should retire to Mukden and Harbin, had a dangerously disturbing effect on our weaker members. It was in the long-run more harmful than any single defeat of a portion of our force would have been.

When the right flank of the 2nd Army fell back, the army held a line from Fu-cha-chuang-tzu to Ssu-fang-tai. The enemy made several unsuccessful attempts to drive us from those of their advanced positions that we had captured, their main efforts being directed towards the recapture of Pei-tai-tzu and Chang-tan-ho-nan. We, on our side, made energetic preparation to continue the advance we had begun so unluckily.

Fresh siege batteries were brought up, the approaches to the enemy's defended posts were carefully reconnoitred, and detailed plans were made. On February 16 we received some drafts, which were used to make good the casualties in the 1st Siberians and the Composite Rifle Corps, both of which had suffered so heavily at Hei-kou-tai.

On February 10 General Kaulbars assumed command of the 2nd Army, and Bilderling temporarily took over command of the 3rd. Meanwhile, early in this month, information kept coming in that large bodies of Japanese cavalry with guns, together with bands of Hun-huses, were collecting in Mongolia, especially near the portion of the railway between Kung-chu-ling and Kuang-cheng-tzu, and early on the morning of the 12th the enemy raided the line north of the station of the former name and blew up a railway-bridge. The same day a reconnoitring party of the Frontier Guards suddenly came on a Japanese force of two cavalry regiments, a battalion, and some 2,000 Hun-huses near the Mongolian frontier. In the ensuing action we lost a number of men and one gun. General Chichagoff continued to report with great insistence that large bodies of the enemy—over 10,000 strong—were collecting in Mongolia for the purpose of cutting our communications. Believing these reports, I detailed a brigade of

the 41st Division and the whole of the Don Cossack Division to reinforce our protective troops on the railway itself, upon which, of course, we were dependent for supplies, drafts, and reinforcements. In addition to this, I also put some 15,000 reservists* under the command of General Nadaroff, to strengthen the Frontier Guards and the line-of-communication troops generally.

The rumours that we heard at this same time also of the landing of a large Japanese force in Northern Korea (assumed to be in connection with the liberation of Nogi's army by the surrender of Port Arthur), part of which might be detailed for operations against Vladivostok, compelled me to take in hand the strengthening of our forces in the Primorsk district, and of the Vladivostok garrison in particular. With this end in view, a mixed brigade of six battalions, formed from men of the 1st Army, was sent to the fortress. In order to enable this brigade to be expanded into a division, and each of the Rifle regiments in the Primorsk district into regiments of four battalions, it was necessary, first of all, to divide the drafts which had come up for the army between the field army and the troops in the Primorsk district. Although forced to reduce the strength of the field army to the

* Out of the 80,000 men of the drafts which had arrived.

above extent, I made a mistake in not insisting upon a sufficiently strong general reserve being formed. To do this I should have taken the whole of the 17th Corps into my reserve, though such a course would have been against the opinion of General Bilderling (who considered it dangerous to weaken the 3rd Army, as he had no reliance in the steadiness of the reserve troops of that army, the 5th and 6th Siberians). Instead of the thirty-two battalions, which would have been thus obtained, only one division, the 6th Siberians,* was added to the general reserve.

In my orders issued after our disastrous action at Hei-kou-tai, it was laid down that as many units as possible should be taken out of the firing-line, so that strong army reserves might be formed. In order to render this possible, it was pointed out that defensive positions should not be held in equal strength along the whole front; that it was sufficient to prepare and hold the most important portions of a line as strongly as possible; and that, by holding on to these at all costs, time would be gained in which reserves could be pushed up to any threatened section. Unfortunately, I left too much to the experience and discretion of the army commanders, and did

* According to the programme of the arrival of the troops, I calculated on increasing my reserve by three and four Rifle brigades, but they arrived more than ten days late.

not sufficiently insist on exact compliance with my instructions.

Adhering to the original plan of offensive operations decided upon in accordance with the opinions of all the army commanders, I requested Kaulbars to fix the first day for the advance. He first chose February 23, but owing to the troops of the 2nd Army being worn out with the very heavy work they had done in connection with the fortification of the positions, the advance was, at his own request, postponed till the 25th. On the 24th, however, Kaulbars heard that the date for the assault of San-de-pu was known to the enemy. He therefore lost hope of success, and asked that the assault might be indefinitely postponed. Meanwhile, on the 23rd, the enemy advanced in force against the Ching-ho-cheng column, and this body fell back from its fortified position next day after fighting an unsuccessful engagement.

At the commencement of the Japanese advance our armies were distributed as follows :

Right Flank.—2nd Army, consisting of the 1st Siberians, Composite Rifle, 8th and 10th Corps, a brigade of the 3rd and a mixed brigade of the 5th Siberians (total, 126 battalions), occupying the line Ssu-fang-tai—Chang-tan-Hou-lien-tai, a length of sixteen miles.

Centre.—3rd Army, consisting of the 5th Siberians (less two regiments), 17th Corps, and

one division of the 6th Siberians (total, 72 battalions), occupying the line Hou-lien-tai-Ling-shen-pu – Sha-ho-pu – Shan-lan-tzu, a length of eleven miles.

Left Flank.—Here were the 1st Army (less one regiment), 4th, 2nd, and 3rd Siberians (the latter less one brigade), 71st Division, Independent Siberian Reserve Brigade, and two Trans-Baikal infantry battalions (total, 128 battalions), occupying the line Shan-lan-tzu–Lu-chiang-tun–Erh-ta-kou–Lia-cheng-wu-tun, and further along the right bank of the Sha Ho, having its left flank three miles east of the Kao-tai Ling (Pass), a length of thirty miles. The 1st Army also had independent columns at Ching-ho-cheng and Hsin-tsin-tin.

The General Reserve consisted of forty-four battalions—namely, the 16th Corps (less one brigade) on the railway six miles south of Mukden station, 72nd Division, and 146th Tsaritsin Regiment, behind the right flank of the 1st Army at Huang-shan.

On February 23 the shortage in the infantry (rank and file) of all three armies was 49,000.

A “Short Account of the Operations round Mukden in February, 1905,” was submitted to His Majesty the Tsar with a letter from me dated May 18, 1905. A detailed description of these operations has been completed, and has now also been submitted to His Majesty. The

whole of the Mukden operations can be divided into three phases :

1. From February 23 to 28, till the turning movement against our right flank developed.
2. From February 28 to March 9—the period of our concentration on the right bank of the Hun Ho, and our attempts to drive back the enemy who were enveloping us.
3. From March 9 to 16—our final attempt to hold on to Mukden, and our forced abandonment of it.

FIRST PHASE.

During this the enemy directed their attention exclusively to the left flank of the 1st Army—to Rennenkampf's force, the 3rd, and (partly) the 2nd Siberians. Amongst the troops operating against Rennenkampf was the 11th Japanese Division from Port Arthur, and from this it was surmised that other portions of Nogi's army were also acting on that flank. The widely extended position of the 1st Army, bearing in mind the absence of an adequate army reserve; the concentration of large bodies of the enemy against the 2nd and 3rd Siberians, disclosed on February 24; the retirement of the Ching-ho-cheng force; the possibility of a turning movement against it; and, finally, the decision of the officer commanding the 2nd Army to postpone the attack indefinitely—all these made me decide to

reinforce the 1st Army quickly from my general reserve, not only in order to check the enemy, but also in order to operate actively ourselves. The first reinforcements despatched were: a brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division on February 24 to protect the left flank of the Ching-ho-cheng force, and the 146th Regiment and 2nd Brigade of the 72nd Division on February 25 to reinforce the left flank of the 1st Army. Finally, when it was discovered that the enemy were operating in great strength against the left flank of the Kao-tai Ling position, the 1st Siberians and 1st Brigade of the 72nd Division were sent on February 27 to assist the 1st Army in its projected advance. On this day, also, the 85th Viborg Regiment was sent to reinforce Daniloff's force. When the 1st Army received these additions, amounting in all to fifty-four battalions, the advance of Kuroki's army and of the right flank force of Kavamura was checked; but still our intended advance did not take place (owing to the exaggerated reports as to the enemy's strength), and the 1st Siberians were sent back to the right flank to rejoin the general reserve.

SECOND PHASE.

The first report of large bodies of Japanese infantry appearing near Ka-liao-ma, on the left bank of the Liao, was received on February 28.

News came in also of the enemy moving along the right bank, and of the appearance of their columns at Hsin-min-tun. It was essential to take immediate steps to meet them on the way to Mukden in their turning movement. I thought it was possible, by using the positions of the 3rd Army as a pivot of manœuvre, and withdrawing its right flank on to the line Ling-shen-pu-Shua-lin-tzu-Lan-shan-pu, to leave* for the defence of the section between the 3rd Army and the Hun Ho, and of that on the right bank, a total of forty-eight battalions, and to transfer on to the right bank the remainder of the 2nd Army (forty-eight battalions), and, after reinforcing them with twenty-four battalions of the 16th Corps and thirty-two battalions collected from the 3rd and 1st Armies, to detail them for operations against Nogi. The command of the troops collected on the right bank of the Hun was entrusted to Kaulbars, and I pointed out to him several times the particular importance of rapid and energetic action against the turning movement which threatened Mukden and our communications.

The first units sent from the main reserve at Mukden to the west were :

1. Towards Kao-li-tun, on the river, to operate against the wide turning movement along the River Liao, a brigade of the 41st Division under Birger.

* For operations against Oku.

2. To Sha-ling-pu, the 25th Division, under General Topornin, commanding the 16th Corps.

3. Simultaneously the 2nd Brigades of the 9th and 31st Divisions were concentrated under the command of Topornin, south of the 25th Division, on March 2.

The successive arrangements made by Kaulbars, in view of the enemy's advance—already commenced on the right of the 2nd Army; the abandonment of Ssu-fang-tai; the withdrawal of troops from the right bank; the relief of corps that had been engaged, and the retention of troops which had already started towards Mukden, not only disclosed to the Japanese the possibility of free movement along the right bank of the river, but delayed the arrival on the western front of reinforcements from the 2nd Army. General Topornin therefore received no support either on March 2 or 3; still, he successfully continued on March 3 the attack commenced the day before on the village of Sha-ling-pu. However, in view of the turning movement that had now become quite clear against our right flank, Kaulbars ordered a retirement--though the enemy were in no way pressing us--to the western Mukden fortifications. The troops took up a line fronting on Ma-tuan-tzu-Wu-kuan-tun, and, in spite of the orders given, did not occupy either the old railway embankment or the fortified position

west of Lin-min-shan-tzu. This direct withdrawal towards Mukden placed our troops in a very disadvantageous position, and enabled the enemy both to continue their turning movement, and make it wider and more dangerous. Immediately after our retirement from Sha-ling-pu, they moved forward quickly and enveloped our western front, and, moving on March 3 across on to the main Hsin-min-tun road, began to threaten Mukden from the north. Birger's brigade, which had now returned from Kao-li-tun, fell back on Hu-shih-tai station.

The protection of Mukden on the west and north was placed under Kaulbars, and was undertaken by units joining the general reserve.

1. The composite divisions of three regiments of the 17th Corps under De Witte took up the fortified position at Khou-kha* on the morning of March 3.
2. A force of seven battalions under Colonel Zapolski was sent to Hu-shih-tai station.
3. The 10th Rifle Regiment was concentrated at siding No. 97.
4. Eighteen battalions of the 1st Siberians came up as a reserve to these on March 3.

The concentration which I had ordered of the units of the 2nd Army on the right bank of the Hun was taking place extremely slowly. Indeed, some regiments which had already assembled had been sent back to the left bank. When I

* [? Houton.—Ed.]

reached Mukden on the 3rd, I impressed on Kaulbars the necessity of not losing any time, and told him to attack the following day, but gave him a free hand as to the direction of attack. He did not carry out the order, owing to the concentration of his army on the right bank not having been completed. Meanwhile, in the early hours of March 4, the important hamlet of Ssu-hu-chia-pu was evacuated by the 2nd Army, and at the same time Ivanoff withdrew the 15th Division from the position behind the Hun and the right flank of the 3rd Army, which he had been told to defend, without fighting. The latter thus became exposed. A brigade of the 5th Siberians and nine *sotnias* of cavalry, which had remained on the right bank near Tung-chen-tzu, were moved across to the left.

During March 4, which was thus lost to us for offensive operations, Nogi continued his turning movement, which was now becoming enveloping and dangerous. Accordingly, after discussing the matter with Kaulbars, I ordered him on the 5th to concentrate sufficient troops for the purpose, and to attack the enemy's left, and I again emphasized the fact that our main chance of success lay in the rapidity and energy with which he struck. In an order of the 2nd Army of March 5, a force of forty-nine battalions was organized to make the attack under the command of Geringross. Here again the concen-

tration was too slow, and the right column only moved out from the line Sha-ho-tzu-Khou-kha about 2 p.m. Its right flank might have been strengthened by a brigade of the 41st Division with Zapolski's column, and the left flank by sixteen battalions of the 25th Division. We therefore might have contained the enemy on the Yang-hsin-tun-Hsiao-sha-ho-tzu line with a force under Tserpitski, and have attacked with a mass of seventy-seven battalions.

Kaulbars, alarmed at Tserpitski's exaggerated reports as to the nature of the attacks made on his left by some three divisions, moved a brigade from Gerngross's force behind the left flank, sent another on to the left bank of the river, and stopped Gerngross's attack till such time as the result of Tserpitski's action should be known. The net result of these proceedings, of the late commencement of the operations, and of their half-hearted nature, was that, although we met with no opposition, on the 5th we moved our right only on to the line Pao-ta-tun-Fang-hsin-tun-San-chia-fen ; and so another day was lost. In accordance with my orders for energetic action, the advance of the right was continued on the 6th, but it was carried out with less men than on the previous day (thirty-three battalions), without energy or cohesion, and met with determined opposition at the village of Liu-chia-kan. Then, before the whole of Gerngross's force had

become engaged, Kaulbars stopped the advance, and gave orders to take up the defensive. That day we got possession only of Tsuang-fang-chih. In short, notwithstanding the great strength of the 2nd Army, with its reinforcements of more than fifty battalions, on March 4, 5, and 6—the three most important days—we moved our right only a few miles forward, and took to defensive measures even on the western front.

Owing to the ill success of the operations of the 2nd Army on March 5, I issued orders to all the armies to send back their divisional baggage along their respective lines of communication towards the north of Mukden. On the 5th the Japanese began a series of attacks on our northern and western fronts. On the left flank of our west front they were everywhere repulsed by Tserpitski and Hershelman, whose forces amounted to forty-nine battalions. In the centre of the western front they won a partial success, on March 7 compelling units of the 25th Division to retire temporarily from Wu-kuan-tun. But on the northern front, which was the most dangerous for us, they won great successes, on the 7th and 8th getting possession of several villages. From there they repeatedly attacked our northern force of twenty-five battalions under Launits, which was holding the line Ta-heng-tun-San-tai-tzu-Kung-chia-tun. At the same time their columns moved still farther to the north, and threatened

Hu-shih-tai station. To protect this, I despatched a force of six battalions of the 4th Siberians to Tsu-erh-tun under Colonel Borisoff. To secure our retirement to Tieh-ling, in case we should not succeed in beating off Nogi's army, on the evening of March 7 I gave orders to the 1st and 3rd Armies, who were too far forward, to retire early on the 8th to our fortified positions south of Mukden—at Fu-liang and Fu-shun. With their retirement and the concentration of the whole of the 2nd Army on the right bank it became possible to allot forty-eight battalions from the 1st and 3rd Armies to operate against Nogi, and to collect seventeen battalions into the reserve of the 2nd Army. Of these reinforcements, General Artamonoff's force of ten battalions alone arrived under my command on the 8th.

THIRD PHASE.

Having failed in our attempts to stop Nogi's army, which was moving round our right flank, first on the line from Sha-ling-pu to the old railway embankment, and then on the line of the Hsin-min-tun main road, I decided to try once more to block it on the line Ku-san-tun-Tsu-erh-tun, and, if a favourable opportunity occurred, to assume the offensive from this line. On the 9th we had the following troops available for the purpose:

1. Borisoff's column of 6 battalions holding

the villages of Tung-chan-tzu, Ku-san-tun, and Hsia-hsin-tun.

2. Artamonoff's column of 9 battalions* at Tsu-erh-tun.

3. Hershelman's column of 14 battalions, sent from the reserve of the 2nd Army to that place. Total, 29 battalions.

On March 9 I ordered Lieutenant-General Muiloff, to whom was given the command of these troops, to co-operate with Launits' force in an attack on the village of Hei-ni-tun. The operation was carried out in a disjointed manner, without careful reconnaissance, and without any arrangement for co-operation having been made with Launits; a bad storm and clouds of sand also impeded us, and the attack failed. The Japanese continued their advance to the north-west. Thus, by the 9th, the enemy was still not driven back on the side where they were most dangerous; part of the village of San-tai-tzu, taken from us in the early hours of that day, remained in their hands. The situation, indeed, appeared critical, for we received news on the same evening of the Japanese advance to the Hun Ho against the section Fu-liang-Hsiao-fang-shen, which was held by weak units of the 1st Army, 4th and 2nd Siberians. Indeed, if we delayed the withdrawal on Tieh-ling longer there was great danger that some of our most advanced

* One was ordered to support General Launits.

forces in the south and south-west might be cut off. Therefore orders were given that same evening for a retirement to Tieh-ling early on the 10th, and for this operation roads were allotted as follows: The 2nd Army was to proceed along both sides of the railway and west of the Mandarin road; the 3rd Army along the Mandarin road and others to the east of it, as far as the Fu-liang-Hsi-chui-chen-Hui-san-Shu-lin-tzu road; the 1st Army along the latter, and the roads to the east of it.

Meanwhile the enemy had on the 9th broken through the 1st Army near Chiu-tien, driving back part of the 4th Siberians from this point to Leng-hua-chi. The officer commanding the 2nd Siberians (next to them) did nothing but merely hold his position on the River Hun at Hsiao-fang-chen, and the enemy spread out along the valley Hsiao-hsi-chua-Hu-shan-pu. The attempt made to drive them back at night by the Tsaritsin Regiment failed.

During the early morning of the 10th our position became yet worse; on the right flank the Japanese drove back Borisoff's force to Hsiao-kou-tzu and opposite San-tai-tzu, and penetrated as far as the grove of the Imperial tombs. On the east large bodies of them appeared in sight of the Mandarin road. One was opposite Levestam's force, while another began shelling the Mandarin road near Ta-wa from the heights near

Hsin-chia-kou. The orders given on March 5 for the baggage to be sent back in good time had not been carried out, and part of the impedimenta of the 2nd and 3rd Armies, which was stretching along the road near Mukden early on the 10th, blocked the passage of the 5th and 6th Siberians and 17th Corps. On this morning also the Japanese, who had broken through near Chiu-tien on the 9th, began to press our left flank under Meyendorff. The troops sent as reinforcements did not act together, and were driven back north-west. By 10 a.m. Meyendorff was in full retreat—not north-east, but north-west towards the Mandarin road, which he crossed between Ta-wa and Pu-ho. The 6th Siberians now began to retire prematurely, and by so doing exposed the right of the 1st Corps and the left of the 17th. This unnecessarily sudden retirement of more than forty battalions under Meyendorff and Sobileff placed the 17th Corps and the 5th Siberians in a difficult position. Instead of fronting south, they had to front south-east. After a hot fight this force, consisting of thirty battalions, was also obliged to move to the rear prematurely. They did not go to Ta-wa, but west and south of the Mandarin road. This opened out a way for the enemy to that road, and also to the railway north—further on the portion between Mukden and Wen-ken-tun. By seizing this section about 2 p.m., before

the rearguards or even the tail of the main body had passed Wa-tzu, they took our troops in flank. We had evacuated the village of San-tai-tzu prematurely, and it was quickly occupied by the Japanese. Between Wa-tzu and this village there is a defile, less than three miles long, through which a large part of the 2nd Army had to force its way under attack from both sides. Portions of the rearguards under Hanenfeld and Sollogub, which tried to get round to the east of it, were captured or destroyed.

I instructed General Dembovski to organize the defence of the Mandarin road at Ta-wa, and for that purpose to utilize the troops retiring along it. By 10 a.m. the distance between the portions of the enemy on the west and east of the railway was only seven miles. It was vital to stop any further contraction of the area of retirement of the 2nd Army. This might be done by blocking the Japanese advance to the railway from the west and north-west. As I was more anxious about the latter direction than any other, I moved out the eighteen battalions under Zarubaeff, which had joined my reserve from the 1st Army, on to the line Ma-kou-chia-tzu-Yang-tzu-tun, and ten battalions of the 72nd Division on the front Tung-shan-tzu-Hsiao-hsin-tun. The first force covered the railway between Hu-shih-tai and San-tai-tzu, and the second barred the enemy's advance and supported the right flank of Art-

monoff's column. As a reserve to these troops, in case of pressure from the east, a brigade of the 1st Siberian Division was left near Hu-shih-tai station. By 4 p.m. the state of affairs on the Mandarin road became worse, as, immediately after General Levastam's force had retired behind Pu-ho, Dembovski also abandoned his positions near Ta-wa, and moved off to the west. The fighting ceased as darkness came on. The last of the 2nd Army to fall back were portions of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Rifle Regiments under Lieutenant-Colonel Korniloff; they broke through near Wa-tzu in the pitch dark, though hemmed in by the enemy on three sides.

We continued to retire during the night, covered by the rearguard under Muiloff and that of Zarubaeff's column. On the 11th several units of the 1st and 3rd Armies collected at the village of Yi-lu; but the greater part of the 3rd Army fell back direct on Tieh-ling. Bilderling was unable to carry out his proposal of remaining on the River Yi-lu till the 12th, and, having taken command of Shileiko's force, after slight opposition retired northwards from Yi-lu village. By doing this he placed the rearguards of the 2nd Army that were still south of this point in a very precarious position. The main bodies of all the armies began on the 11th to occupy a position eight miles south of Tieh-ling on the Fan Ho. The 2nd Army took up a line to the

west and the first one to the east of the Mandarin road, the 3rd remaining in reserve. Everything possible was done to restore order amongst the troops, transport, and parks. On the 13th the enemy's advanced troops reached our positions, and on the 14th they attacked, directing their main effort on the line between the sections held by the 2nd Siberians and 72nd Division. All their attacks were repulsed with great loss, and many hundreds of dead were left in front of our position. Our losses were 900.

The two-weeks battle had badly disorganized several units, especially those of the 2nd and 3rd Armies. The men who had got separated from their own units and attached to others had to be sorted out and restored, baggage, transport, and parks had to be separated, and ammunition replenished. To carry this out made it essential that we should not be in direct touch with the enemy—that there should be some space between us. For this reason, and on account of the turning movement against our right flank along the River Liao, discovered by the cavalry, I decided not to accept battle at Tieh-ling, but to order a general retirement of all the armies on the 14th to the Hsi-ping-kai position, which was the best one between Tieh-ling and the River Sungari. The 1st and 2nd Armies began to move out of Tieh-ling on March 16, and by the 22nd were on the heights of Hsi-ping-kai.

CONCLUSIONS UPON THE BATTLE OF
MUKDEN*

BOTH the nearness of the events related above and our ignorance about the enemy make it impossible for any detailed and absolutely impartial judgment to be formed upon the reasons for our defeat in this great battle. The records that have been collected so far, however, are sufficient to throw light upon a few facts—upon certain of our dispositions that did not correspond to the requirements of the case. Those made by the commander of the 2nd Army, to which force was entrusted the duty of stopping Nogi's turning movement towards our rear, are of particular interest, and certain of them which had a very important bearing on the issue of the operations are now described.

General Kaulbars made neither a sufficient nor a clever use of his cavalry. This fact, coupled with the unfortunate selection of its leaders, was the reason why the mounted branch did such bad work,† and behaved in a manner that can hardly be called “devoted” during the Mukden operations. In the instructions given on March 1 to Grekoff's cavalry to operate against Nogi, the object to be attained was

* [The body of Vol III. in the original deals in great detail with the battle of Mukden, and is omitted in this translation.—Ed.]

† Except from February 27 to March 1.

plainly set forth, but how it was to be attained was not clearly defined. The execution of its most important task was also made the more difficult by the fact that Grekoff's force was, on the same day as the orders were issued, split up into two almost equal groups, of which the eastern was found to be fighting Oku instead of Nogi. To rectify this, the cavalry under Pavloff was ordered on the same day by Kaulbars to undertake a special task against the turning columns, but on the 2nd the order was changed, and eight of Pavloff's *sotnias* were put under the command of Launits, who was operating against Oku. No touch was maintained between their different groups, and the greater part of the mounted forces clung to the infantry, and did practically no fighting (the losses suffered by this Arm during the twenty-three days' operations in February and March were quite insignificant). Yet most of our regiments were quite capable of performing the most difficult tasks of war. The action of the infantry of the 2nd Army on the positions which they had taken up was completely passive. They did not try to get into touch with the enemy to ascertain their strength and dispositions (by taking prisoners), or to occupy advanced posts where these would be advantageous. The reconnoitring patrols of this army also did but little work. The consequence of such unsatisfactory perform-

ance of their duties by the cavalry and advanced infantry units of the 2nd Army was that information of the enemy was so meagre that the appearance of a great mass of Nogi's army on and to the east of the Hsin-min-tun road came as a complete surprise to Kaulbars.

Owing to the appearance of large hostile bodies near Ka-liao-ma, I had on February 28 already ordered him* to take immediate steps to ascertain their exact strength, the direction in which they were moving, and their intentions. I repeated this order† on March 2, instructing him to find out their strength and dispositions more accurately if possible, and to frame some plan of action. I pointed out the necessity for energetic steps to ascertain the whereabouts of Nogi's main body—whether it was opposite Shaling-pu, or whether it was executing a wider turning movement. On the morning of March 5 I for the third time‡ asked Kaulbars to find out where Nogi's left flank was. Not one of these orders was carried out, with the result that I had inadequate and incorrect information upon which to form a decision as to the strength and whereabouts of the enemy operating on the right bank of the Hun. Tserpitski's alarmist reports to the effect that more than three divisions were opposed

* 12.20 p.m., February 28.

† 3.25 p.m., March 2.

‡ 6.45 a.m., March 5.

to him made the fog worse. Kaulbars, who had been ordered to stop Nogi's flanking movement, on the strength of incorrect information, all the time turned his chief attention towards the western front to Oku, whom he took for Nogi. The latter, owing to the 2nd Army's inaction on March 3, 4, 5 and 6, was made a present of four days in which to complete his sweeping movement to the north-east,* and Kaulbars continued to see danger only on the west, paying insufficient attention to what was happening on the Hsin-min-tun road, north-west of Mukden. On March 1 he conceived a most complicated "castling" manœuvre, which he endeavoured to carry out when in direct touch with the enemy. The Composite Rifle Corps was ordered to cross from the right bank of the Hun on to the left, and the 8th Corps from the left to the right. The Rifle regiments crossed over the river, and by so doing evacuated the most important section near Chang-tan, but the 8th Corps was unable to get across. The enemy at once took advantage of this, and, rapidly throwing their 8th Division forward along the right bank of the river, drove back the relatively weak force of ours still on that side. Kaulbars, moreover, stopped the movement on Sha-ling-pu (of the Composite Division under Golembatovski), which had already been started, and by so doing deprived

* [Query north-west.—Ed.]

us of the possibility of checking the heads of the enemy's columns on March 2. Finally, the 5th Rifle Brigade under Churin—which was moving by my orders to operate against Nogi—was stopped on March 3 by Kaulbars in the valley on the right bank of the Hun, and found itself among the troops opposing Oku.

After weakening Topornin by sixteen battalions, Kaulbars, on reaching his force, countermanded the advance on Sha-ling-pu, which had been begun on the morning of the 3rd, and suddenly withdrew thirty-two battalions to Mukden without fighting. This made our position distinctly worse. He took no steps to establish and maintain touch with Birger's brigade on the Hsin-min-tun road, and never informed the latter of the order to retire he had given to Topornin on the 3rd. In telling Launits on the morning of March 3 of his decision (to withdraw Topornin's force to Mukden), he stated that "Grekoff's column and Birger's brigade are probably cut off from Mukden," but he made no attempt to help Birger. And yet up to 2 p.m. on the 3rd Birger's brigade was not even engaged. Our attempt to retake Ssu-hu-chia-pu on March 4 was stopped by Launits, owing to the receipt of orders from Kaulbars not to attack if it was likely to be a costly operation. Kaulbars did nothing that day, although he had under his

command 119 battalions* on the right bank of the Hun, and although I had ordered him to assume the offensive. Moreover, he did not even know the whereabouts of the troops under him. Although he had 113 battalions under his command on the right bank on March 5, he again did nothing. He did not carry out my orders to attack the enemy's left energetically, and permitted these troops, which were at Khou-kha—next to Gerngross's force—to deploy very slowly, and stopped their advance before they had got in touch with the enemy. Moreover, yielding to the preconceived idea of the main danger lying in the west, he moved sixteen splendid battalions of the 10th Corps from Gerngross's force, operating towards Hsin-min-tun, on to the left flank of the army. Yet again on the 6th, although he had 116 battalions on the right bank, he effected scarcely anything, for our active operations towards Hsin-min-tun were conducted with an insufficient force, and therefore failed.

The result of his dispositions from March 2 to 5 was that on the 6th we did not have a single battalion of the 2nd Army operating against Nogi, whereas we should have had forty.† All ninety-six battalions of the 2nd

* In addition to five and a half battalions of the 41st Division.

† Sixteen battalions of the 19th Corps, concentrated at Sha-ling-pu under my orders on March 2; sixteen battalions

Army were on that day distributed on the defensive against Ōku. This distribution of troops, which in no way met either the general requirements or the definite task given to Kaulbars—to stop Nogi's army—constituted one of the main reasons of the failure of our operations at Mukden.

On the 2nd and 3rd the following troops were given to Kaulbars from my reserve for his operations against Nogi:

	Battalions.			
16th Corps	24
1st Siberians	18
De Witte's column (3rd Army)			...	15
Zapolski's column	4
				<hr/>
Total	61

Moreover, sixteen battalions of the 10th Corps (2nd Army) were by my orders concentrated opposite Sha-ling-pu on the 2nd, and on the 7th the 10th Rifle Regiment and two battalions of the 4th Siberians were sent from my reserve to join Kaulbars' army—*i.e.*, he was given in all eighty-one battalions, of which sixty-five had not previously belonged to the 2nd Army. Of these, as transpired later, as many as thirty-five battalions did not take part, or only

of Golembatovski's; and eight battalions of Churin's division, detained by Kaulbars on the way to join the troops operating against Nogi.

took very little part, in any fighting up to the 10th—*i.e.*:

	Battalions.			
1st Siberians	13
De Witte's column	13
2nd Brigade, 9th Division	8
10th Rifle Brigade	2
				<hr/>
Total	35

These units either occupied defensive positions, and merely watched the Japanese making a flank march past them,* or were moved for no reason from one place to another (2nd Brigade of the 9th Division). Their losses from the 3rd to 9th were trifling.

On the 4th, when I ordered Kaulbars to "move every available man on to the right flank near the Hsin-min-tun road," the reverse was done. Two regiments (Tambov and Zamost) were moved from the right bank of the river on to the left; the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Division was ordered to move away from the Hsin-min-tun road, and crossed from Huang-ku-tun to Liu-kou-tun, and the Primorsk Dragoons from an important position on this road were sent to the rear to Hu-shih-tai.† On March 5 we were able to collect more than 100 battalions for

* Major-General Krauze's report.

† And fifty battalions collected towards Hsin-min-tun were thus left with two squadrons of the Niejinsk Dragoons.

operations against Nogi, 70 being concentrated by my instructions. But although Kaulbars had received orders to send an army corps on to the right bank of the Hun to engage Nogi, he not only did not carry out the order, but lost five days (March 2 to 6), and thus allowed the turning movement to develop so far that part of the force I had collected (25th Division) was on the 7th operating, not against Nogi, but against Oku's left flank. Moreover, as he had on the 5th also weakened the force collected by me to act against Nogi by sending 16 battalions to the left flank of the 2nd Army, the result of these dispositions and our inaction during these five days was that on the 7th only 37 battalions operated against Nogi instead of 100. The loss of time, and the weakness of the force that actually opposed Nogi, were largely contributory to our failure.

Having so far employed only a very small part of the troops entrusted to him for offensive operations, on the 7th Kaulbars definitely and finally assumed the defensive. He did not even seize the opportunity of the repulses suffered by the enemy at Wu-kuan-tun and against Tserpitski's force to attack. On the 7th, 8th, and 9th, with 140 battalions at his disposal, he assumed a passive rôle everywhere. While allowing a great confusion of units, he did not take proper steps, which he was quite able to do,

to re-establish the corps, divisional and brigade organization, and on the 8th he did not take advantage of the possibility of forming a reserve from the entire 10th Corps, which would have enabled him to re-establish the organization of the other corps. On the 4th he removed Generals Muiloff, Topornin, and Kutnevich from the command of their corps for no reason, and as he did not replace them by other officers, the staffs of these corps were headless. The employment of the reserves in the 2nd Army was neither carried out by arrangement, nor in accordance with the actual necessities of the situation, so that there were instances of reserves being sent up when not required (Gerngross on March 8). In spite of my order, which he received on the 5th, to send back the baggage and transport to the north, Kaulbars only obeyed this instruction in regard to Tserpitski's and Gerngross's columns on the 9th, and thus made our retirement, especially that of our rearguards, most difficult. He failed to observe the appearance or concentration of the enemy on the northern front, and took no steps to avert this danger. The concentration of our forces on this side was carried out under my own orders. Had it not been for this, the enemy would have seized the village of San-tai-tzu and the grove of the Imperial tombs on the 7th.

One occasion when Kaulbars did issue orders

that met the case was when he ordered Launits to attack the enemy on March 10 at Hei-ni-tun so as to assist the retirement, and he got together a strong force for this purpose. But then, when these troops were on the point of commencing the attack, he went to Launits and countermanded it, without even informing me of this most important change in his previous dispositions. Yet, had this attack been only partially successful, it would have greatly relieved the situation. Right up to March 13 not one of the arrangements made by him was fully carried out, and it is clear that he did not even then in the least appreciate the conditions. In addition to wasting time, extending his front, and acting only on the defensive, he did not realize the danger of Nogi's appearance at such a moment north of Mukden, nor of his movement round our flank. In a letter to me of August 11, he wrote that on March 8 and 9, "although we had been retiring for a week, circumstances were going very well for us, as, the further the enemy moved northwards, the nearer they were getting to their Poltava."

From the above it can be seen that Kaulbars' dispositions, his inaction, and his misunderstanding of the whole situation, could not lead the 2nd Army to Poltava. On the contrary, on March 8 and 9, 1905, it was nearly a case of Tsushima.

It only remains for me to conclude with a few pages out of the short report on the war which I submitted to His Majesty the Emperor.

“ Of the many causes contributing to the disastrous issue to the Battle of Mukden, I will only mention the following :

“ 1. The fall of Port Arthur liberated Nogi’s army, the whole of which took part in the battle. The formation of the new divisions in Japan was completed at the same time, and, judging by the prisoners we captured, two of these also took part in the battle. The immediate making good of wastage in their ranks presented no particular difficulty to the enemy, owing to the relative proximity of Japan to the theatre of war, and the resultant ease with which she was able to transport her troops by sea. Judging by the muster rolls found on the dead and wounded, the effective strength of their companies was between 200 and 250 rifles, and all casualties were at once replaced.

“ The liberation of Nogi’s army and the landing of troops in Northern Korea compelled us to increase the force detailed for the defence of the Primorsk district and Vladivostok, and the appearance of bodies of Japanese cavalry, together with artillery and numerous bands of Hun-huses in Mongolia, coupled with the raids on the railway, which were becoming more frequent, necessitated steps being taken to increase the railway guard along its 1,350 miles’ length in Manchuria.

“ These two measures took fourteen battalions and twenty-four *sotnias* from the field army, and also a large number of the 80,000 reservists then being sent to the front as drafts.

“ All these things combined enabled the Japanese at the battle of Mukden to be as strong as, if not stronger than, we were in the number of rifles.

“ 2. The tardy discovery by our cavalry of the enemy’s movement round our right flank, when ‘ strong columns of Japanese infantry ’ had already appeared at Ka-liao-ma.

“ 3. The complete lack of energy displayed by the officer in command of the 2nd Army in repulsing Nogi’s force which was moving round us, with the result that we lost seven most important days (March 1 to 8).

“ 4. His complete ignorance of the strength and whereabouts of the enemy moving round his right. The lack of information and the inaccuracy of what was received rendered some of my own dispositions not only unnecessary, but wrong. As a particular instance, I may mention that I only knew for certain when it was too late that the enemy were not making (as had been reported) a wider turning movement on both banks of the Liao towards Tieh-ling.

“ 5. The lack of energy displayed by senior officers of the 3rd Army on March 10 in overcoming the difficulties of the retirement. Their passive attitude with regard to the enemy’s movements towards the Mandarin road—illustrated by the diversion of the various columns (on encountering the enemy) towards the west on to the line of retirement of the 2nd Army, instead of forcing back the enemy away from the Mandarin road.

“ The inaction of the 55th Division of the 6th Siberians was remarkable. The commander of this unit, who only had this one division under his command, decided to place it directly under

the officer in command of the 1st Corps. Having done so, he rode away from his division to Ta-wa village. When he reached the railway on the morning of the 11th, he was unable to inform me where his division* was !

“ 6. The failure of the commanders of the 2nd and 3rd Armies to carry out the orders I had given some days before the retirement began to send back the baggage and transport northwards. It was the disorder and panic which occurred amongst these auxiliary services on the retirement that caused the loss of so many guns and limbers, and ammunition and baggage waggons.

“ 7. The inertia displayed by the officers commanding the 2nd Siberian Division and the 2nd Siberians, when an attempt was made to prevent the enemy breaking through near Chin-tien, and when later they spread north of the Mandarin road. Besides the twenty-four battalions of the 1st Corps and the 4th Siberians, which did remain on the right flank of the 1st Army, the 55th Division might have been used in this operation. But the officer commanding the 2nd Siberians received the enemy's advance passively, merely throwing back his right flank, and thus presenting the enemy with an opening for their advance on to the Mandarin road.

“ 8. Nevertheless, I consider that I myself am the person principally responsible for our defeat, for the following reasons :

“ (a) I did not sufficiently insist on the concentration of as large a general reserve as possible before the operations commenced.

* In the afternoon of the 11th this division began to move on Tieh-ling ; it had only suffered small loss during the battle.

“(b) I weakened myself just before an important battle by a brigade of infantry and a Cossack division (believing General Chichagoff’s reports). If I had not sent one brigade of the 16th Corps for duty on the communications, and had insisted on the 1st Siberians being sent back from the 1st Army at full strength, I should have had two full corps available for operations against Nogi’s turning movement.

“(c) I did not take adequate measures to prevent the confusion of units. Indeed, during the battle I was myself compelled to contribute to the disintegration of corps.

“(d) I should have made a better appreciation of the respective spirit of both sides, as well as of the characteristics and qualifications of the commanders, and I should have exercised more caution in my decisions. Although the operations of the 2nd Army from March 2 to 7 failed in their object, my firm belief in ultimate victory resulted in my ordering a general retirement later than I ought to have done. I should have abandoned all hope of the 2nd Army defeating the enemy a day sooner than I did ; the retirement would then have been effected in complete order.

“(e) When convinced of Kaulbars’ inertia and passive tactics, I should have taken command of the troops on the right bank of the Hun personally. On March 9 I should similarly have taken command of Muiloff’s force, and acted as a corps commander.”

In my letters of March 31 and May 13, 1905, to His Majesty the Emperor, I reviewed gener-

ally the factors which made the war extraordinarily difficult for us.*

Has the army survived its Tsushima? No; it went through nothing nearly so bad as that. We fought hard everywhere, and we inflicted greater losses on the enemy than they on us. We were weaker in numbers than they were, and we retired. Even the Mukden reverse owes its reputation as a decisive Japanese victory to the impressions of our own correspondents, who were with the baggage and in rear. Can one say that the Russian land forces were defeated, when in the first important battles (at Liao-yang and on the Sha Ho) we only put into action a fourteenth part of our armed forces, and at Mukden, at a time when the Japanese had already put forth their greatest efforts, we had less than a sixth of our force? Nor must it be forgotten that we fought against a nation of 50,000,000 martial and ardent souls, who, hand in hand with their Emperor, were able to grasp victory by fearing no sacrifice. To defeat such a foe in such a distant theatre of war, great and continued efforts were required of the whole of our country as well as of the army. In the beginning of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries we waged great wars with such leaders as

* [Only the concluding portion of what follows in the original is given here; the remainder is an exact repetition of what has been more than once recapitulated.—ED.]

Charles XII. and Napoleon. In these we also experienced defeat, but in the end we issued absolute victors. In the eighteenth century, between defeat at Narva and victory at Poltava nine years elapsed; in the nineteenth, between defeat at Austerlitz and our entry into Paris there was also nine years' interval.

The events which happened in the Far East in 1904-05 can, owing to their historical importance and their significance for Russia and the whole world, be placed alongside those through which Russia passed in the early years of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the struggle with Charles XII. and Napoleon the Russian people was at one with the Tsar, and bravely bore all trials and sacrifices, strengthening and improving the army, treating it with kindness, believing in it, wishing it well, and profoundly respecting it for its gallant deeds. The people realized the necessity for success, hesitated at no sacrifice, and were not troubled by the time required to gain it, and the harmonious efforts of Tsar and people gave us complete victory. The way to victory is in the present day by the same road which our ancestors followed in the early years of the last two centuries.

If mighty Russia, headed by the Tsar, had been permeated by a brave and single-minded desire to defeat the Japanese, and had not

stinted the sacrifices and time necessary to preserve Russia's integrity and dignity, our glorious army, supported by the trust of its ruler and a united people, would have fought until the enemy had been vanquished.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE ROYAL TIMBER COMPANY*

AMONG the first questions suggested by General Kuropatkin's narrative and the editorials, reports, and official proceedings that he quotes, are: Who was State Councillor Bezobrazoff? How did he acquire the extraordinary power that he evidently exercised in the Far East? Why was "everybody"—including the Minister of War—"afraid of him"? Why did even the Viceroy respond to his calls for troops? and why was his Korean timber company allowed to drag Russia into a war with Japan, apparently against the opposition and resistance of the Tsar, the Viceroy, the Minister of War, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Port Arthur Council, and the diplomatic representatives of Russia in Peking, Tokio, and Seoul?

No replies to these questions can be found in General Kuropatkin's record of the events that preceded the rupture with Japan, but convincing answers are furnished by certain confidential

* [This extract is, by the kind permission of the editor, reprinted from *McClure's Magazine*, where it appeared as an editorial note upon the article on these memoirs, published in September, 1908.—ED.]

documents found in the archives of Port Arthur, and published at Stuttgart,* just after the close of the war, in the Liberal Russian review *Osvobojdenie*. Whether General Kuropatkin was aware of the existence of these documents or not I am unable to say; but as they throw a strong sidelight on his narrative, I shall append them thereto, and tell briefly, in connection with them, the story of the Ya-lu timber enterprise as it is related in St. Petersburg.

In the year 1898, a Vladivostok merchant named Briner obtained from the Korean Government, upon extremely favourable terms, a concession for a timber company that should have authority to exploit the great forest wealth of the upper Ya-lu River.† As Briner was a promoter and speculator who had little means and less influence, he was unable to organize a company, and in 1902 he sold his concession to Alexander Mikhailovich Bezobrazoff, another Russian promoter and speculator, who had held the rank of State Councillor in the Tsar's Civil Service, and who was high in the favour of some of the Grand Dukes in St. Petersburg.

* *Osvobojdenie*, No. 75, Stuttgart, August 10, 1905. No question has ever been raised, I think, with regard to the authenticity of these letters and telegrams; but if there were any doubt of it, such doubt would be removed by a comparison of them with General Kuropatkin's memoirs.—G. K.

† Asakawa, who seems to have investigated this matter carefully, says that the original contract for this concession dated as far back as August 26, 1896, when the Korean King was living in the Russian Legation at Seoul as a refugee.—“The Russo-Japanese Conflict,” by K. Asakawa, London, 1905, p. 289.

Bezobrazoff, who seems to have been a most fluent and persuasive talker, as well as a man of fine presence, soon interested his Grand Ducal friends in the fabulous wealth of the Far East generally, and in the extraordinary value of the Korean timber concession especially. They all took shares in his enterprise, and one of them, with a view to getting the strongest possible support for it, presented him to the Tsar. Bezobrazoff made an extraordinarily favourable impression upon Nicholas II., and in the course of a few months acquired an influence over him that nothing afterward seemed able to shake. That the Tsar became financially interested in Bezobrazoff's timber company is certain ; and it is currently reported in St. Petersburg that the Emperor and the Empress Dowager together put into the enterprise several million roubles. This report may, or may not, be trustworthy ; but the appended telegram (No. 5), sent by Rear-Admiral Abaza, of the Tsar's suite, to Bezobrazoff in November, 1903, indicates that the Emperor was interested in the Ya-lu enterprise to the extent, at least, of the two million roubles mentioned. Bezobrazoff's "Company," in fact, seems to have consisted of the Tsar, the Grand Dukes, certain favoured noblemen of the Court, Viceroy Alexeieff probably, and the Empress Dowager possibly. Bezobrazoff had made them all see golden visions of wealth to be amassed, power to be attained, and glory to be won, in the Far East, for themselves and the Fatherland. It was this known influence of Bezobrazoff with the Tsar that made "everybody" in the Far East "afraid of him" ; that enabled him to enlist in the service of the timber company even officers of the Russian General Staff ; that caused Alexeieff to

respond to his call for troops to garrison Feng-huang-cheng and Sha-ho-tzu ; and that finally changed Russia's policy in the Far East, and stopped the withdrawal of troops from Southern Manchuria.

General Kuropatkin says that the Russian evacuation of the province of Mukden "was suddenly stopped by an order of Admiral Alexeieff, whose reasons for taking such action have not to this day been sufficiently cleared up." The following telegram from Lieutenant-Colonel Madridoff, of the Russian General Staff, to Rear-Admiral Abaza, the Tsar's personal representative in St. Petersburg, may throw some light on the subject :

(No. 1.)

To ADMIRAL ABAZA,
HOUSE NO. 50, FIFTH LINE,
VASSILI OSTROFF, ST. PETERSBURG.

Our enterprises in East constantly meet with opposition from Dzan-Dzun of Mukden and Taotai of Feng-huang-cheng. Russian officer merchants have been sent East to make reconnaissances and examine places on Ya-lu. They are accompanied by Hun-huses, whom I have hired. The Dzan-Dzun, feeling that he is soon to be freed from guardianship of Russians, has become awfully impudent, and has even gone so far as to order Yuan to begin hostile operations against Russian merchants and Chinese accompanying them, and to put latter under arrest. Thanks to timely measures taken by Admiral, this order has not been carried out ; but very fact shows that Chinese rulers of Manchuria are giving themselves free rein, and, of course, after we evacuate Manchuria their impudence and their opposition to Russian interests will have no limit. *Admiral (Alexeieff) took it upon himself to order that Mukden and Yinkow (Newchuang) be not evacuated.* To-day it has been decided to hold Yinkow,*

* The italics are mine.—G. K.

but, unfortunately, to move the troops out of Mukden. *After evacuation of Mukden, state of affairs, so far as our enterprises are concerned, will be very, very much worse,* which, of course, is not desirable.* To-morrow I go to the Ya-lu myself.

(Signed) MADRIDOFF.

Shortly before Lieutenant-Colonel Madridoff sent this telegram to Admiral Abaza, Bezobrazoff, who had been several months in the Far East, started for St. Petersburg with the evident intention of seeing the Tsar and persuading him to order, definitely, a suspension of the evacuation of the province of Mukden, for the reason that "it would inevitably result in the liquidation of the affairs of the timber company." From a point on the road he sent back to Madridoff the following telegram, which bears date of April 8, 1903, the very day when the evacuation of the province of Mukden should have been completed, in accordance with the Russo-Chinese agreement of April 8, 1902 :

(No. 2.)

To MADRIDOFF,
PORT ARTHUR.

There will be an understanding attitude toward the affair after I make my first report. I am only afraid of being too late, as I shall not get there until April 16, and the Chief leaves for Moscow on April 17. I will do all that is possible, and shall insist on manifestation of energy in one form or another. Keep me advised, and don't get discouraged. There will soon be an end of the misunderstanding.

(Signed) BEZOBRAZOFF.

On April 24, 1903, Bezobrazoff sent Madridoff from St. Petersburg a telegram written, evi-

* The italics are mine.—G. K.

dently, after he had made his first "report" to "the Chief." It was as follows:

(No. 3.)

To MADRIDOFF,
PORT ARTHUR.

Everything is all right with me. I hope to get my views adopted in full as conditions imposed by existing situation and force of circumstances. I hope that if they ask the opinion of the Admiral (Alexeieff), he, I am convinced (*sic*), will give me his support. That will enable me to put many things into his hands.

(Signed) BEZOBRAZOFF.

General Kuropatkin says that Admiral Alexeieff gave him "repeated assurances that he was wholly opposed to Bezobrazoff's schemes, and that he was holding them back with all his strength"; but the Admiral was evidently playing a double part. While pretending to be in full sympathy with Kuropatkin's hostility to the Ya-lu enterprise, he was supporting Bezobrazoff's efforts to promote that enterprise. Bezobrazoff rewarded him, and fulfilled his promise to "put many things into his hands" by getting him appointed Viceroy. Kuropatkin says that this appointment was a "complete surprise to him"; and it naturally would be, because the Tsar acted on the advice of Bezobrazoff, Von Plehve, Alexeieff, and Abaza, and not on the advice of Kuropatkin, Witte, and Lamsdorff. It will be noticed that Von Plehve—the powerful Minister of the Interior—is never once mentioned by name in Kuropatkin's narrative. Everything seems to indicate that Von Plehve formed an alliance with Bezobrazoff, and that together they brought about the dismissal of Witte, who ceased to be Minister of Finance on August 29,

1903. Anticipating this result of his efforts, and filled with triumph at the prospect opening before him, Bezobrazoff wrote to Lieutenant-Colonel Madridoff on August 25, 1903, as follows :

(No. 4.)

“The great saw-mill and the principal trade in timber will be transferred to Dalny, and this in co-partnership with the Ministry of Finance. The Manchurian Steamship Line will have all our ocean freight, amounting to 25,000,000 feet of timber, and the business will become international. From this you will understand how I selected my base and my lines of operation.”

In view of the complete defeat of such clear-sighted statesmen and sane counsellors as Kropatkin, Witte, and Lamsdorff, there can be no doubt that Bezobrazoff’s “base and lines of operation” were well “selected.”

The document that most clearly shows the interest of the Tsar in the Ya-lu timber enterprise is a telegram sent to Bezobrazoff at Port Arthur in November, 1903, by Rear-Admiral Abaza, who was then Director of the Special Committee on Far Eastern Affairs, over which the Tsar presided, and who acted as the latter’s personal representative in all dealings with Bezobrazoff and the timber company. In the original of this telegram significant words, such as “Witte,” “Emperor,” “millions,” “garrison,” “reinforcement,” etc., were in cipher; but when Bezobrazoff read it he (or possibly his private secretary) interlined the equivalents of the cipher words, and also, in one place, a query as to the significance of *artels*—did it mean mounted riflemen or artillery? The following copy was made from the interlined original :

(No. 5.)

FROM PETERSBURG,

To BEZOBRAZOFF,
PORT ARTHUR.

November 14-27, 1903.

Witte has told the Emperor that you have already spent the whole of the two millions. Your telegram with regard to expenditure has made it possible for me to report on this disgusting slander, and at the same time contradict it. Remember that the Chief counts on your not touching a rouble more than the three hundred without permission in every case. Yesterday I reported again your ideas with regard to the reinforcement of the garrison, and also with regard to the *artels* (mounted Rifles or artillery?) in the basin. The Emperor directed me to reply that he takes all that you say into consideration, and that in principle he approves. In connection with this the Emperor again confirmed his order that the Admiral telegraph directly to him. He expects a telegram soon, and immediately upon the receipt of the Admiral's statement arrangements will be made with regard to the reinforcement of the garrison, and at the same time with regard to the mounted Rifles in the basin. In the course of the conversation the Emperor expressed the fullest confidence in you.

(Signed) ABAZA.

General Kuropatkin refers again and again to the Tsar's "clearly expressed desire that war should be avoided," and he regrets that His Imperial Majesty's subordinates "were unable to execute his will." It is more than likely that Nicholas II. did wish to avoid war—if he could do so without impairing the value of the family investment in the Korean timber company—but from the above telegram it appears that as late as November 27, 1903, only seventy days before the rupture with Japan, he was still disregarding the sane and judicious advice of Kuropatkin, was still expressing "the fullest confidence" in Bezobrazoff, and was still ordering troops to the valley of the Ya-lu.

APPENDIX II

BREAKDOWN OF THE UNIT ORGANIZATION
AND DISTRIBUTION*

AMONGST the causes which added to our difficulties must be mentioned the frequent breakdown in action of the normal organization of the troops. It began when war was declared, and though efforts were made to rectify things as far as possible, it was not till after the battle of the Sha Ho that we were really able to re-establish our formations. But both the corps and divisional organization again disappeared during the battle of Mukden, and the resulting confusion to a certain extent contributed to our defeat.

When war began the corps organization of the troops stationed in the Far East was not complete, and one corps was formed of the independent Rifle brigades. When the Rifle regiments were brought up to a strength of twelve battalions, the normal composition of the 1st and 3rd Siberian Divisions was twenty-four battalions. The 2nd Siberian Corps was supposed to consist of one Rifle division and one reserve division formed in the Trans-Baikal district. Before hostilities commenced, a division of the 3rd Siberian Corps (the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division) was moved by the Viceroy to the Ya-lu; the 4th East Siberian Rifle Division, with the corps staff, remained in Kuan-tung. The 1st Reserve Division, which constituted part of the 2nd Siberian Corps, I kept at Harbin, and this corps remained with

* [Extracted from Chapter X.—Ed.]

only one division till I was appointed Commander-in-Chief. When the operations began, I endeavoured to reform the dislocated corps organization. I therefore collected on the line Liao-yang-Feng-huang-cheng the 3rd and 6th Siberian Rifle Divisions, and formed with them a corps which I called the 3rd Siberians. At first I did not succeed in sending to this corps the 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiment—it being stationed in Mukden as a guard on the Viceroy's Headquarters—and my subsequent request that it might be sent to the Ya-lu to join the corps there was refused ; it was only sent forward after the battle of the Ya-lu. The line Liao-yang-Ta-shih-chiao-Port Arthur was guarded by the 1st Siberian Corps, at full strength. The 2nd Siberian Corps, in which was included the 2nd Brigades of the 31st and 35th Divisions, which had arrived in the Far East in 1903, composed my reserve, and was divided between Liao-yang and Hai-cheng.

At first, owing to our paucity of numbers, the 3rd Siberians had to defend a large tract of country. Six regiments of this corps were on the line River Ya-lu-Feng-huang-cheng-Fen-shui-ling-Liao-yang ; one regiment was on the line Ta-ku-shan (sea and mouth of Ya-lu)-Hsui-yen-Ta Ling-Hai-cheng. One regiment was on the line Kuan-tien-cheng-Sai-ma-chi-An-ping-Liao-yang. When the 4th Siberians arrived, the line Ta-ku-shan-Ta Ling-Hai-cheng was occupied by one of its brigades, because a considerable number of Japanese had made their appearance in this direction. The remaining three brigades were concentrated near the station of Ta-shih-chiao,* as a reserve either for the

* At the junction of roads near Newchuang.

1st Siberians to the south or the brigade of the 4th Siberians on the Ta Ling (Pass). All the units of the 10th Army Corps which arrived from Russia were collected on the line Sai-machi-An-ping-Liao-yang, where Kuroki's army was in force. As soon as the units of the 4th Siberians and 10th Army Corps occupied the above-mentioned lines, the regiments* belonging to the 3rd Siberians were moved off to join their own corps. On arriving from European Russia, the units of the 17th Army Corps were concentrated near Liao-yang, and formed my main reserve.

The two brigades of the 10th and 17th Army Corps, which arrived in the Far East in 1903, were organized as independent brigades, and, till the troops concentrated at Liao-yang, operated with the advanced forces. The brigade of the 35th Division fought with the 1st Siberians, to which it was sent up as a reinforcement in the battle of Te-li-ssu. The brigade of the 31st Division sent to reinforce the troops operating on the line Ta-ku-shan-Ta-Ling-Hai-cheng, together with the 5th East Siberian Rifle Division, became part of the 2nd Siberians. When the Japanese advanced with all their three armies on July 31, the general disposition of our troops was as follows :

1. To the south, opposite Oku's army, were the 1st and 4th Siberian Corps, total forty-eight battalions (the 1st Siberians at full strength, the 4th Siberians consisting of three brigades), under the command of General Zarubaeff.

2. On the line Ta-ku-shan-Ta-Ling-Hai-cheng, opposite Nodzu's army, were the 2nd Siberians and a brigade of the 4th Siberians,

* The 21st and 23rd East Siberian Rifle Regiments.

total twenty-eight battalions, under the command of Lieutenant-General Zasulitch.

3. On the line Ya-lu-Fen-shui-ling-Liao-yang, opposite Kuroki's army, were the 3rd Siberians, and the 10th and 17th Army Corps, total eighty battalions, under the command of General Bilderling. At this time the 5th Siberians were, by the Viceroy's orders, detrained at Mukden, and told off to protect the rear and the line Pen-hsi-hu-Mukden, and to act at the same time as a reserve for the advanced corps. When we moved towards Hai-cheng the brigade of the 4th Siberians operating on the line Hai-cheng-Ta Ling-Ta-ku-shan, returned to its own corps. In retiring towards Liao-yang, the two brigades of the 10th and 17th Army Corps, which had been sent out to the Far East in 1903, joined these corps.

During the first days of the battle of Liao-yang the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Siberians and 10th Army Corps took part at their full strength of units. The 2nd Siberians had only one division, and the 17th Army Corps concentrated on the right bank of the Tai-tzu Ho, and was not at first engaged. When we crossed on to the right bank of the river, in order to operate against Kuroki, the corps organization became in several instances quite dissolved. In addition to the 2nd and 4th Siberians, we had to leave a brigade from both the 3rd Siberians and the 10th Army Corps for the defence of the immense fortified camp at Liao-yang itself. At the time of our advance at the beginning of October, I did everything possible to keep the corps organization intact. The 1st and 3rd Siberians and the 1st, 10th, and 17th Army Corps operated at full strength, while the 4th and 6th Siberians had

three brigades each, one brigade of the 4th Siberians being sent to strengthen the 3rd, which had a particularly difficult task allotted to it, and one brigade of the 6th Siberians (which was under me) being left by the Viceroy's orders to protect our rear. The 2nd Siberians, which consisted of the 5th East Siberian Rifle Division, was strengthened by five reserve battalions. The 5th Siberians was alone (for good reasons) split up into two groups, one operating under the command of the corps commander on the extreme right flank, the other on the extreme left under General Rennenkampf. The account of the September operations of the Eastern and Western Forces, given in Chapter IX., shows to what an extent the units became mixed by the mere course of the fighting. As soon as I was appointed Commander-in-Chief, I did my best to prevent this in the future. The 61st Reserve Division, which did not belong to an army corps, and had been detailed by the Viceroy to strengthen the Vladivostok District, was sent by me to the field army and incorporated in the 5th Siberians, in place of the 71st Division, which was concentrated on the extreme left flank under the command of General Rennenkampf. All the regiments of the 1st Siberian Division were sent to join the 2nd Siberian Corps, and the 1st Siberian and 10th Army Corps were moved at full strength from the first line to my main reserve. The 3rd, 4th, and 6th Siberian and the 1st and 17th Army Corps were at full strength—distributed along the first lines and in reserve. The 2nd and 5th Siberian Corps had each only three brigades, one brigade of the latter having been left on the right bank of the Hun Ho to protect our extreme right. A brigade of the 5th Division holding

Putiloff Hill was left, at the special request of the officer commanding the 1st Manchurian Army, on the positions which had been captured by the splendid regiments of this brigade (19th and 20th East Siberian Rifle Regiments). As soon as the 8th and 16th Army Corps arrived they were posted to my main reserve; the three Rifle Brigades were formed into a Composite Rifle Corps.

Early in January, 1905, I concentrated all three corps of the 2nd Army—*i.e.*, the 8th, 10th, and Mixed Rifle Corps in reserve, and I had in my main reserve the 1st Siberians with a division of the 16th Army Corps (the other was still on the railway). We had altogether 128 battalions in reserve, and our position was most favourable. It might, however, have been still better if I had insisted on strong army reserves being formed in the 1st and 3rd Armies. My proposal to move the 17th Army Corps back from the advanced lines met with a strongly worded request that the distribution of the 3rd Army might be left as it was. In the 1st Army I might have insisted on the whole of the 4th Siberian Corps being sent to join the reserve after the transfer of the Rifle Brigade from Putiloff Hill to the strong Erh-ta-ho position. I made a mistake also in forming three Rifle Brigades together into one corps. If I had kept them as independent brigades, it would have been unnecessary to take brigades from army corps whenever independent brigades were required. Although the Japanese had fewer battalions than we had, these were much stronger than ours; they also had more independent units than we had. Their divisions were not organized in corps, their small armies being made up of divisions and independent

brigades, and our corps organization was not sufficiently flexible to meet the thirteen to fifteen Japanese divisions, and a similar number of independent brigades. The enemy were able to take divisions and brigades from the advanced positions and transfer them, without upsetting their existing organization, and with far greater ease than we could move our corps. When an independent brigade operated against us—as, for instance, on the line Sai-ma-chi-An-ping—we were obliged to break up our corps organization in order to meet it with one of our brigades ; this happened in the 10th Army Corps.

Again, owing to the general course of events and other reasons over which I had no control, our corps organization had to be broken up before the operations at Hei-kou-tai, but was restored as soon as possible. It also occurred during the February fighting round Mukden, where the circumstances, indeed, did not in every case warrant it. After General Gripenberg's disastrous operations at Hei-kou-tai our strategical position was altered much for the worse. Four army corps, which had until then been standing in reserve, were sent up into the fighting-line, and three of them became hopelessly mixed up in the process. At the time I thought it only possible to keep one corps (the 1st Siberians) in reserve, but the 16th Army corps, the 72nd Division, a brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division, and the Tsaritsin Regiment were available, as it turned out. This made a total reserve of eighty-two battalions. With such a strong main reserve I hoped to be able to meet the enemy successfully, if, on being reinforced by Nogi's army from Port Arthur, they took the offensive.

According to our estimates, the fall of Port Arthur might reinforce the Japanese field army by some fifty battalions altogether, but we thought that the greater portion of Nogi's army would be sent to operate against Vladivostok, or via Possiet towards Kirin, so as to take us in the rear. The possibility of this made us extremely sensitive, both as to our rear and as regards Vladivostok. The first thing we did, therefore, on Nogi's army being set free, was to strengthen the garrison of the latter place, which was very weakly held for the extent of the defences. I sent there from all three armies cadres of a strength of six battalions, which were to expand into four regiments so as to form the 10th East Siberian Rifle Division. It was thought that, upon a general assumption of the offensive, the Japanese would simultaneously try to bring about a rising of the local native population, and to destroy the railway bridges behind us. To give colour to our fears, a whole series of reports, each more alarming than the last, were received from General Chichagoff. In these he described the large numbers of the enemy that had appeared behind us with the intention of seizing Harbin as well as of destroying the railway. I mentioned (Vol. III.) how this officer calculated the strength of the enemy in our rear at tens of thousands, and how persistent he was in his demands that the troops guarding the line might be strengthened. As a proof of the urgency of the circumstances, he reported the defeat, with a loss of guns, of some Frontier Guards sent out by him to reconnoitre east of the Kuan-cheng-tzu station. Later information corroborated these reports in so far that parties of the enemy, accompanied by bands of Hun-huses, had penetrated

far in rear, broken through our line of posts between Kuan-cheng-tzu and Bei-tu-ne, and were threatening the latter point, which, being our central corn-supply dépôt, was of immense importance to us. Large bodies of Japanese and Hun-huses were also reported as moving in the direction of Tsit-si-har with the intention of blowing up the important railway-bridge across the River Nonni, and thus cutting our railway communication. One of the large bridges near the station of Kung-chu-ling was, after a skirmish with our guards, destroyed. In the face of such "circumstantial evidence" as the loss of guns and the destruction of bridges, it was impossible not to credit General Chichagoff's reports (the extent of their exaggeration we did not find out till later), and to refuse him assistance. The security of our communications was literally vital, for even their temporary disorganization meant catastrophe. Not only the flow of reinforcements to the front, but the collection and distribution of local supplies would have ceased. As we were over 5,300 miles away from our base (Russia), we had been forced to form a local supply base, and the loss of this would have threatened the army with starvation. As, therefore, the actual numbers guarding the railway were small, I increased them by one brigade of the 16th Army Corps and four Cossack regiments. My staff inclined to the opinion, indeed, that six Cossack regiments should have been sent.

In February the Japanese moved forward in strength, carrying out a frontal attack combined with simultaneous turning movements against both our flanks. To carry out such an operation successfully implies great numerical superiority on the side of the attackers, or else great attenua-

tion along their front ; and relying, apparently, on the strength of their positions, the Japanese did weaken their front to a very great extent. Our best plan would accordingly have been to have attacked them in the centre in the hope of breaking through there, and then operating afterwards against the outflanking movements. But this might have been disastrous, for if they succeeded in holding their frontal positions with comparatively small numbers stiffened by extra artillery and machine guns and well reinforced by reserves [which were] in their case splendidly organized], we might still have been outflanked by the turning movements.

The special difficulty of frontal attacks was amply confirmed during the Mukden battles, for, although our troops there held very extended positions, they repulsed the Japanese whenever the latter made only a frontal attack. When, therefore, the Japanese assumed the offensive, and Kavamura's movement round our left flank developed, I determined to check it by attacking Kuroki in front and flank. The situation on our left had become very alarming, for by losing the strong Chin-ho-cheng position and retiring towards Ma-chun-tan we had exposed the left flank of the 3rd Siberian Corps on the Kao-tai Ling (Pass). A still wider turning movement threatened to throw the 71st Division back on Fu-shun, but the reinforcements rapidly sent to the 1st Army from the main reserve were able to arrest Kavamura's movement, largely owing to the behaviour of General Rennenkampf's and Daniloff's 71st and 6th East Siberian Rifle Divisions, which fought with great gallantry and stubbornness. If the 1st Army, which had a strength of 175 battalions, had made a successful

advance, it ought to have influenced the operation then under way against our right. Being anxious to take the offensive, I gave Linievitch, commanding the 1st Army, the chance of selecting the main point of attack, and he decided to strike the point where Kuroki's and Kavamura's armies joined. The orders had been issued, and the movement had actually begun, when certain unconfirmed reports as to the movement of some Japanese divisions round the left flank of the 3rd Siberians unfortunately led him to stop the attack and send back such units of the 1st Siberian Corps as had been lent to the 1st Army for the operation. We had lost several days in collecting troops for this offensive movement, and large bodies of the enemy had meanwhile been moving round our right. I have described in detail (Vol. III.) the steps taken to avert this danger, and the results achieved. Here I will only mention them briefly. Against the 2nd Army, which consisted of ninety-six battalions, and which was mostly located on the left bank of the Hun Ho, Oku was operating with the greater part of his army. His right flank was, according to our information, operating against the 5th Siberians, and part, probably, against the 17th Army Corps of the 3rd Army. Thus, opposed to the troops under General Kaulbars' command at the time when Nogi's advance developed, there were, according to our calculations, not more than thirty-six to forty Japanese battalions. As the 2nd Army was reinforced by twenty-four battalions of the 16th Army Corps from the main reserve, theoretically we should have driven Oku's army south by an energetic offensive, and, having thus cut it off from Nogi's force, should

have fallen on the latter. To do this we should have had to seize the fortified positions with strong defensive points near the village of San-de-pu by frontal attack. Practically, in the much more favourable conditions of a month previous, 120 battalions of the 2nd Army had been unable to drive the enemy southwards and get possession of this village after six days' continuous fighting. There was every reason to fear, therefore, that even if we gained possession of these points, and succeeded in forcing back Oku's army, so many men would have been expended in the effort that we should have been in no condition to oppose Nogi, who could then have captured Mukden, and cut off the 2nd and 3rd Armies from their communications.

Whatever course was decided upon, our weakness in power of manœuvre, the strength of the Japanese divisions, and their great powers of defence, had to be borne in mind. On the whole, a consideration of these points rather led to the conclusion that it was probably a distinct advantage to them to engage as many of us as possible in a frontal attack on their positions, so that they might be the more certain of success in their turning movement. After looking at the question from all sides, I decided to stand on the defensive in the front of the 2nd and 3rd Armies, and to move as quickly as possible sufficient troops to the right bank of the Hun Ho to check and then drive back Nogi's army, which was executing the turning movement. The first troops to be used for this were those of the 2nd Army, whose duty it was to protect the right flank of our whole force. For this purpose I first took one corps from this army, calculating

that the sixty-four remaining battalions could without difficulty withstand any onset by Oku (of from thirty to forty battalions). General Baron Kaulbars was ordered to move this corps as quickly as possible towards the village of Sha-ling-pu, where I proposed to concentrate the units to oppose Nogi. To operate against him I then moved up twenty-four battalions of the 16th Corps together, putting them also under the command of General Kaulbars, while as a reserve to these advanced troops I took twelve battalions from the 3rd and the 1st Siberian Corps, which I ordered to move towards Mukden and rejoin my reserve as soon as news was received of the attack being stopped, and of the departure of the 1st Army to Chi-hui-cheng. Thus, arrangements were made for the concentration of ninety-two battalions, which by March 3 should easily have been able to cover our right flank, check Nogi's army, and drive it back. Unfortunately, our hopes of what was going to be effected on this flank were not fulfilled. In order to move this army corps against Nogi, Kaulbars essayed a most complicated manœuvre —namely, to move the Composite Rifle Corps from the right bank of the Hun Ho on to the left, and to replace it on to the right bank by the 8th Army Corps, which was to move on Sha-ling-pu. The first part of this plan was carried out—the Rifle Corps crossed on to the left bank, but, owing to the Japanese pressure, the 8th Army Corps remained on that side. Thus the units of the two Corps became mixed up. Of the 2nd Army, only two brigades (of the 10th Army Corps), which had been sent there under my orders, together with the 25th Infantry Division, arrived at Sha-ling-pu.

Meanwhile the whole of the 10th Army Corps, or at least twenty-four battalions of it, might have been moved there, for it was opposed by very few of the enemy. The transfer from the right—the threatened—bank of the Rifles had, as is now known, very serious consequences, for by it the right flank of the 2nd Army was uncovered too soon, and the units there, being attacked in front and flank, began to retreat, which caused the adjacent troops to do the same.

From the information I received as to the enemy's movements, I decided to move the 16th Army Corps in two directions—one portion direct on Hsin-min-tun, and the 25th Division on Sha-ling-pu. When it became apparent that the enemy were not advancing behind the Liao Ho, but between it and the Hun Ho, Kaulbars very properly gave orders for a brigade of the 41st Division to be sent up towards the 25th Division at Sha-ling-pu. We should have thus had the 16th Corps, consisting of twenty-four battalions, all together; and to this it was General Kaulbars' intention to add the 8th Army Corps at full strength. As this force would have been reinforced by me by another Siberian corps, we should have had three army corps against Nogi. Unfortunately, however, Kaulbars countermanded the orders already issued to General Birger (to join the 25th Division), and this brigade continued to act independently, and added to the existing confusion of troops, especially when it split up and retired in two directions—towards Mukden and Hu-shih-tai station. Instead of the 8th Army Corps arriving to reinforce the 25th Division, two brigades of the 10th Army Corps turned up. Finally,

Linievitch did not consider it possible to carry out his orders (to send the 1st Siberian Corps to Mukden at full strength), and asked permission to detain two regiments of it, and so the divisions of the 1st Siberian Corps arrived in Mukden with only three regiments each. Fully recognizing the danger of our position on the right flank, the commander of the 3rd Army sent his army reserve of three regiments of the 17th Army Corps to Mukden, and on his own initiative added to them the Samara Regiment (three battalions), which had been sent to him the day before with a view to strengthening his left. Meanwhile the different orders given during the fighting between February 23 and March 4 by the commanders of the 1st and 2nd Armies resulted in an inextricable confusion of lesser units, which added to that caused by the breakdown of the corps organization. As there were insufficient army reserves, Linievitch reinforced the troops that were being attacked from the corps reserves of those corps which had not been attacked. For instance, when the enemy's advance against the left flank of the 1st Army began, certain units of the 3rd Siberian Corps, by moving eastwards along the front, were able to strengthen Rennenkampf's force. When the Kao-tai Ling position—defended by the 3rd Siberians—was attacked, this corps was supported by portions of the 2nd and 4th Siberian Corps to the west of them; when the 2nd Siberians were attacked they were reinforced by units of the 4th.

Thus the reinforcements sent up by me only served to heighten the general confusion of units caused by the orders of the officer commanding the 1st Army and of the corps commanders.

Against Kavamura on March 1 and 2 there were in the 1st Army the 71st Division, consisting of three regiments, the whole of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division, one regiment of the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division, and one regiment of the 1st Army Corps—total twenty-nine battalions.* Against Kuroki were the 3rd East Siberian Rifle Division, consisting of three regiments, one regiment of the 71st Division, two of the 4th Siberians, and one of the 2nd Siberians—total twenty-five battalions. On the assumption that we should attack, I sent to these troops the 72nd Division and the 1st Siberians at full strength, as well as one regiment of the 1st Army Corps—total forty-four battalions. Thus sixty-nine battalions were concentrated on and behind the positions of the 3rd Siberian Corps. Farther west, on the positions of the 2nd Siberian Corps, there remained of this corps fourteen battalions, which, reinforced by a regiment of the 4th Siberians, successfully repulsed all attacks, including an assault made by the Japanese Guards. Still farther west, on the positions of the 4th Siberians, which were not attacked, there were twenty to twenty-four battalions of this same corps. Finally, against Nodzu's right twenty-four battalions of the 1st Army Corps not only completely repulsed all attacks, but pressed forward very successfully. Generally speaking, although the units of the 1st Army were considerably mixed up, the corps organization of the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Siberians and the 1st Army Corps was not very much disturbed.

In the 2nd Army matters were worse. The

* Of these a brigade of the 6th East Siberian Rifle Division and one regiment of the 1st Army Corps were sent by my orders.

unsuccessful attempt to "castle" two corps (the Composite Rifle and 8th Army Corps) was the start of the break-up of the army corps organization, and in beating off the enemy these two corps, together with the 10th, became still more involved. Throughout the fighting of the night of March 4 no touch was kept between the different units of the 8th Army Corps. The 14th Division (three regiments) and one regiment of the 15th Division crossed on to the right bank of the Hun Ho and moved westwards, while the 15th Division (three regiments) arrived behind the left flank of the 3rd Army after a night march to the north-east. On the morning of the 4th mingled portions of all these corps took up fresh positions on both banks of the Hun Ho.

Sufficient efforts were not made to readjust matters either in the divisions or corps. The commander of the 10th Army Corps maintained under his command only two brigades of the 9th and 31st Divisions (consisting of sixteen battalions), which had been moved by my order towards Sha-ling-pu; the commander of the 16th Army Corps was with the 25th Infantry Division, which had sixteen battalions; while neither the commanders of the 8th or Composite Rifle Corps had got so many troops directly under them. By General Kaulbars' orders, Tserpitski was appointed to command the left wing of the troops moved on to the right bank of the Hun Ho; among these was only one regiment of the 10th Army Corps, the remainder belonging to the 8th Army, Composite Rifle, and 5th Siberian Corps. At the same time as Kaulbars appointed Tserpitski, he removed the commanders of the 8th, Composite Rifle, and 16th Corps from the direct command of troops.

This gave the *coup de grâce* to the corps organization of this army. It was now completely destroyed. As I have mentioned (Vol. III.), there was an opportunity on March 6 of withdrawing the whole of the 10th Army Corps from the first line, and so reorganizing the 8th Corps and the Composite Rifles properly, but the commander of the 2nd Army did not seize it.

The inaction of the 2nd Army on March 4, its passive and disastrous operations on the 5th and 6th, placed our right flank in a very difficult position. Nogi was moving not only along the flank, but to the rear of the 2nd Army. The commander of this army, continuing to see danger where there was none, paid particular attention to Oku's operations, and left Nogi to move round to our rear without hindrance. Indeed, had I not interfered on March 7, Nogi's force would have seized Shan-tai-tzu, the Imperial Tombs, and Mukden, and moved in rear of the 2nd Army. By my orders the defence of the positions near Shan-tai-tzu, Ta-heng-tun, and Wen-ken-tun was organized so as to face to the north and west. The movement of the 3rd Army towards the Hun Ho contracted our position, and enabled me to withdraw to my main reserve portions of the 9th, 15th, and 54th Divisions, and by means of this concentration the danger of Nogi's movement to our rear was temporarily averted, but in the section held by the 2nd Army we were fighting on three fronts—west, south, and north. Under such conditions I naturally sent into action those units which were nearest. Still, the defence of the northern front was entrusted to a brigade of the 41st Division, the Volinsk Regiment, and to the 9th Rifle Regiment. Near Tsu-erh-tun were

concentrated three regiments of the 9th and three of the 54th Divisions.

On the 6th and 7th I made a final attempt to wrest victory from the Japanese. Hoping that Kuroki had suffered heavily on the preceding days, and relying on the splendid material in the 1st Army, I made up my mind, after considerable discussion of the matter with its commander on the telephone, to weaken that army considerably, so as to make certain of having sufficient men at Tsu-erh-tun. I augmented my main reserve by the whole of the 72nd Division, a brigade of the 2nd Siberian, and eighteen battalions from the 1st Army and 4th Siberian Corps. The commander of the 1st Army was of opinion that if we did not soon have a success on the right this weakening of the 1st Army might be a danger, but though fully realizing the force of his contention, I considered it necessary to take the risk for the following reasons:

1. One hundred and five splendid battalions were still left under the command of General Linievitch.

2. The enemy in front of the 1st Army must, according to the reports sent in by its commander, have lost very heavily.

3. The Japanese had transferred almost the whole of Oku's army to the right bank of the Hun Ho, immediately after Nogi's, and we had either to break through this disposition or strengthen those of our forces on the right bank of the Hun Ho by a lateral movement. As I have described already (Vol. III.), our hopes were not realized. The movement of the reserves to Tsu-erh-tun was effected very much more slowly than we had counted upon, and, taking advantage of our reduction in strength on the front held by

the 1st Army, the enemy broke through there. At the point of our position (Chu-tien) where the enemy broke through, *there should have been, according to the arrangements of the officer commanding the 1st Army, four regiments of the troops under his command, but as a matter of fact there were only ten companies of the Barnaul Regiment.** Taking all the circumstances into consideration, our retirement was, in my opinion, a day too late, and instead of throwing all the reinforcements which arrived at Tsu-erh-tun into the fight, some of them (General Zarubaeff's force) had to be kept as a last reserve in case the enemy attempted to close us in with a ring of fire.

In the last fights at Mukden, the 4th Siberian Corps was scattered along the whole front, but the enemy being at that spot in inconsiderable strength, did not attack its strong position at Erh-ta-ho. Thirty-two splendid battalions of this corps might have been used by the commander of the 1st Army for a local counter-attack, or, together with the troops of the 1st Army Corps or those of the 2nd Siberians, for a greater effort at the counter-offensive, for which a very favourable opportunity presented itself when the enemy attacked the 2nd Siberians. By advancing we could have taken the attacking forces in flank and rear, and the Japanese Imperial Guards would have been threatened with disaster. But the opportunity was not seized. Hence the 4th Siberian Corps, having no force opposed to it, only

* The Omsk Regiment lost its way, and for a long time could not be found, and the Krasnoyarsk and Tsaritsin Regiments were kept with the 2nd Siberian Corps.

formed, so to speak, a reserve to the 1st and 2nd Armies.

On the whole, the confusion was at its greatest between March 8 and 10 on the northern front of the 2nd Army, but the energetic and gallant General Launits was in command, and he not only beat back all attacks, but rescued the inert units of the 2nd Army, whose rear Nogi was threatening. On March 10 General Muiloff, in command of the rear-guard (composed only of the Lublin Regiment), gallantly and successfully carried out the difficult duty of covering the retirement of the 2nd and 3rd Armies.

It must be remembered that, though the corps organization mostly broke down, the regimental organization was preserved, and this gave a cohesion in action which, when taken advantage of, served us right well. The preservation of the regimental organization was also important on account of the rationing of the troops. The first line transport (with field kitchens and two-wheeled ammunition carts) were kept with regiments, and so ammunition and food were in many cases most opportunely forthcoming in spite of the mixing up of units. The nearness of our supplies also at Mukden enabled us easily to refill regimental reserves. Against the 1st Siberian Corps at the bloody action at Su-no-pu (near San-de-pu) on January 27—a fight that was more or less unpremeditated on both sides—units of five different Japanese divisions were engaged, though the enemy had a comparatively small force in the field. The enemy, therefore, must also have suffered from confusion.

I have endeavoured to give some explanation of how it was that units got mixed up; but I consider that it was in many cases quite un-

necessary. Consequently, when I reported to the Tsar that I was mainly responsible for our disaster at Mukden, I pointed out that one of my mistakes was that I did not sufficiently legislate to prevent this confusion, and that, as a matter of fact, I was forced by circumstances to add to it.

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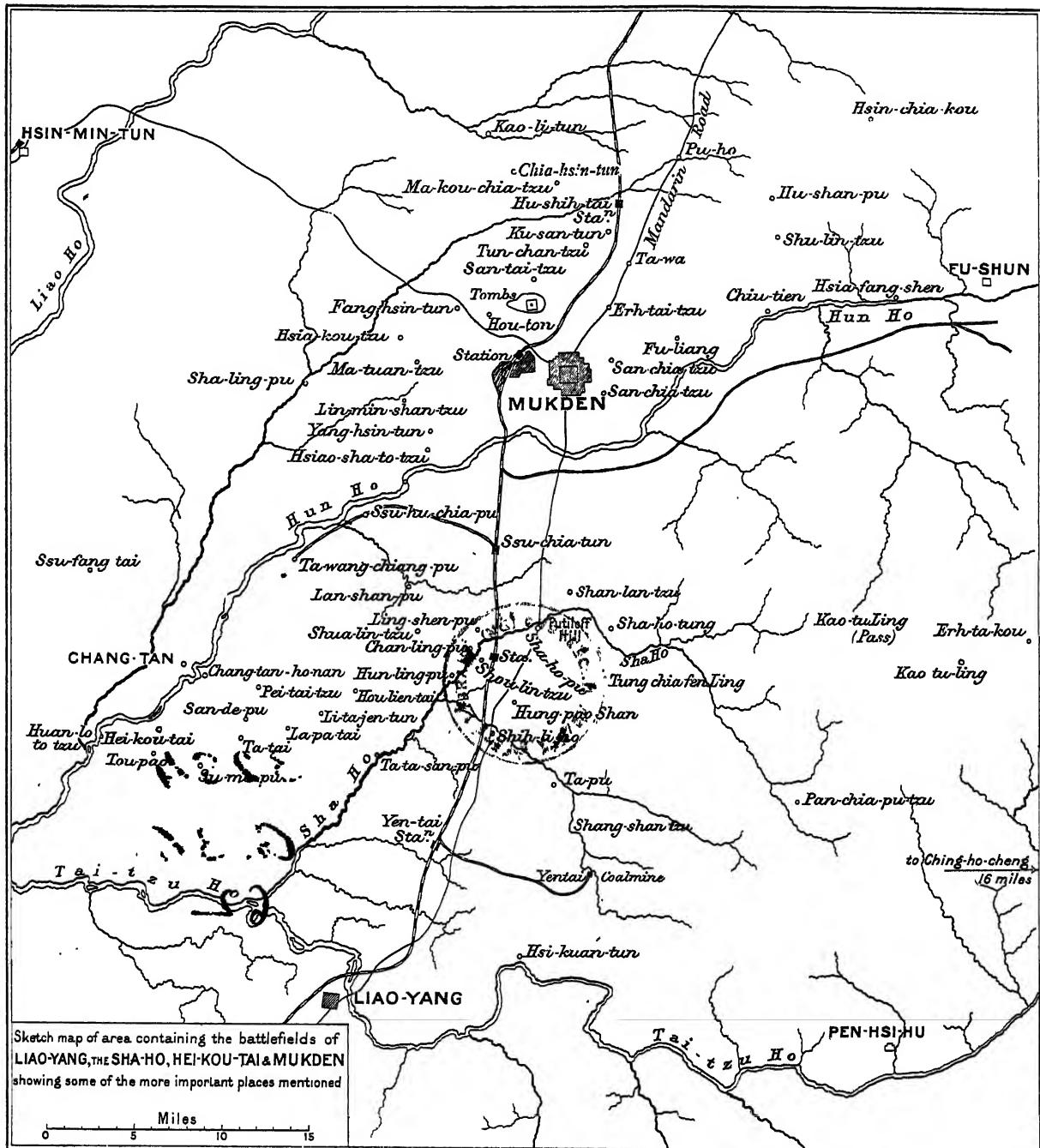
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